Principles and Practice in Critical Theory:

Children's Literature.

by

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Abstract

Abstract of a Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of Bristol by Karin Beate Lesnik-Oberstein, September 1990.

Title: Principles and Practice in Critical Theory: Children's Literature.

In this thesis it is proposed that children's literature criticism may be discussed in terms of the idea, based on elements of the writings of Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Philippe Ariés, and Jacqueline Rose, that 'childhood' and the 'child' are not stable ontological concepts, but changing and variable narratives which operate in conjunction with the hierarchically dominant narratives of 'adulthood'. Children's fiction criticism is based on an acceptance of, and reliance on, 'the child as reader', which is portrayed in many different versions for many different purposes. Rather than offering 'solutions' to the self-defined problems of children's fiction and children's fiction criticism, this thesis wishes to explore the operation of purposes within children's literature criticism, and the way these purposes direct and define the use of texts on, and ideas of, education, childhood, and children.

In the first four chapters views on children as readers in some of the writings on education and politics of Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Cicero, and Quintilian, and of Vives, Comenius, Erasmus, Luther, Montaigne, J.S. Mill, Locke, and Rousseau, and the views of some of the commentators on these writings, are discussed to argue that children's literature criticism is not primarily a field originating from a split of books for children into 'schoolbooks' and 'children's' fiction', whereby a criticism developed for the 'fiction' branch, but that children's fiction and children's fiction criticism are firmly encompassed by, and rooted in, the narratives of the 'liberal arts' educational ideals and its attendant socio-political and personal ideologies.

In the fifth chapter the ideas and claims of the children's literature critics are set out in their own terms, while the sixth, and final, chapter concentrates on discussing relationships between 'children's' literature criticism and 'adult' literature criticism.

Dedication

To Laura

Acknowledgements

I have been tremendously lucky to have had the benefit of the support and encouragement of many people and institutions.

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is an original work, written by myself alone, and not previously submitted for any purpose to any institution. Any information and ideas from other sources are acknowledged fully in the text and references.

signed: Karen Lesnik-Oberstein

date: 5-09-1990

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Introduction

The Russian writer on, and of, children's stories, Kornei Chukovsky, relates how he once received a letter from a parent, complaining about his writings of nonsense-verse. The letter writer asked of him:

> Why do you distort realistic facts? Children need socially useful information and not fantastic stories about white bears who cry cock-a-doodle-doo. This is not what we expect from our children's authors. We want them to clarify for the child the world that surrounds him, instead of confusing his brain with all kinds of nonsense.[1]

Chukovsky's reaction to this view was to 'feel not only depressed but also stifled'.[2] He replies to the accusations in the letter that, on the contrary,

> the nonsense that seemed to him [the letterwriter] so harmful not only does not interfere with the child's orientation to the world that surrounds him, but ... strengthens in his mind a sense of the real; and that it is precisely in order to further the education of children in reality that such nonsense verse should be offered to them.[3]

In this exchange we find expressed several ideas pertaining to children and reading: there are the obvious differences of opinion with the letter-writer arguing for the need for strict (or more strict) realism, and Chukovsky pleading for nonsense-verse and the use of fantasy. But equally important are the underlying assumptions shared by Chukovsky and the letter-writer, namely the ascribing of powerful educational and developmental functions to children's reading, no less than a 'clarification of the world that surrounds him', a 'strengthening in his mind [of] the real'.

The premises on which the letter-writer and Chukovsky's exchange is based are still the subject of controversy, not only with regard to children, but also with regard to adult readers. Though the mechanics of the reading-process have been explored to an extent (though not fully explained) the psychological and sociological aspects of reading, especially the reading of fiction, remain subject to even more differing views and attitudes. The complex interactions between an individual reader and a text, and their relationships to surrounding social, historical, and cultural circumstances remain open to many interpretations and explanations. Depending, firstly, on the reasons for having an interest in books and reading, and, secondly, on the different underlying assumptions on which the arguments are based, there are many different views on the nature of reading. In examining these views one must take account of the motives and aims directing these views, and this is particularly true in relation to the study of children's books and children's reading. In the Western industrialised nations ideological, political, and moral issues assert themselves with concentrated vigour with regard to 'children'. The near total dominance of the adult world over children, established, at its most fundamental level, by chronology, creates an uneasy field of tensions relating to control, self-control, and the pressures, joys, and uncertainties, of power. It is a complex hierarchy: in so far as any society and culture are developing when a child enters them, an inevitable interaction is established and maintained, as between any novice and some form of establishment. Rousseau, for instance, comments on this power structure repeatedly in Émile. Regarded as one of the central figures in developing modern attitudes towards children, he writes:

> There is no subjection so complete as that which preserves the forms of freedom; it is thus that the will itself is taken captive.[4]

In the democracies of Europe and Northern America the status of the hierarchy is expressed, amongst other things, in the adult right to vote. This right is the expression of the central democratic ideals of the freedom of choice and the right to have a say in one's own political and personal destiny: these rights do not extend to children, on a political or ideological level at least, and many decisions are made for them. The regulating forces (conscious and unconscious, direct and indirect) exercised by adults over children, whether for their benefit and protection, or out of malevolent motives, are most obviously visible throughout our society in the shape of laws concerning the child's place in the family (i.e. adoption and custody; fostering; laws pertaining to ownership and transfer of property; laws concerning child abuse), and rules organizing the child's place in public life (legislation on child education and child labour).

The hierarchical relationship between adulthood and childhood is also strongly reflected in the frequently cited paradox that children's books are, in fact, written, published, reviewed, criticised, and, often, selected and bought, by adults. In this position of responsibility and authority, adults concerned, in whatever way, with children and reading, have been anxious to explain the nature and function of children's reading, as we could see in the exchange between Chukovsky and the letter-writer. There exists a large community of people who have an interest in considering these problems: (children's) authors, publishers, critics, reviewers, booksellers, general readers, and, sometimes, in some capacities, teachers and librarians, psychologists and parents, politicians and philosophers. Their interests

range from trying to estimate the marketable value of a book, to trying to assess a text's literary qualities, or evaluating the use of a text for a school curriculum. At the core of these endeavors however, lie the two basic issues: what happens when we read a book, and, that as Julia Briggs puts it:

> the study and interpretation of fiction for children pose, in an acute form, the fundamental questions raised by all fiction: who writes, for whom and why?[5]

Because, as Juliet Dusinberre expresses it, 'it is parents, not children, who care about the forming of the child's mind,'[6] the nature of the influence and effects of reading are a central concern in most children's book studies. A Dutch writer on children's literature, J. Riemens-Reurslag, formulates this issue as follows:

> can the transference of ideas from a book happen in such a way that it has a deep influence on the life of a child, or is a book only capable of awakening thoughts already present in the child? And to what extent can this transference of ideas take place?[7]

It is clear here that this question forms one small aspect of the larger debates concerning the role of 'nurture' against 'nature'. As Sara Goodman Zimet puts it:

> both personal testimony and empirical research strongly suggest that while our attitudes, values and behaviours may be influenced by what we read, when left to our own initiative we read what we are. In other words, we select our readings to support our predispositions rather than in order to change them .... Evidence supporting quite the opposite position [can also be] presented ... demonstrating, in effect, that we are what we read.[8]

In so far as these questions remain problematical far beyond even the field of children's books, it is still difficult to discuss cogently relevant issues such as

censorship, use of children's books in home and at school, and the literary status of these books. Julia Briggs writes that 'a responsible and thoughtful criticism is clearly desirable, but where is it to begin?'[9] In another article, Briggs also explains why she feels this criticism, in her view, is necessary: 'there is no critical consensus as to whether children's books are appropriately examined by the same criteria that are applied to adult literature, or whether they constitute a special - and different - case.'[10] It is the intention of this thesis, then, to attempt to examine, and thereby hopefully also contribute to, the terms of reference of these critical discussions about children's books.

My own interest in examining these issues arises, on the one hand, from an observation that many of the conflicts within the field of children's books remain unresolved on both a theoretical and a practical level, and on the other hand, from a deep interest in attitudes toward, definitions of, and the relationships between 'childhood' and 'adulthood'. The adult-child hierarchy involves conscious and unconscious power over children: it is perhaps only in admitting this, and examining the complex uses and functions of this power, that, I believe, interested persons can try and realize ideals for children and adults, and the relationships between them. Even the specific freedoms of democracies must, initially, be inculcated and controlled. If this is a possible interpretation on a socio-political level, parallels can be drawn on the level of personal emotions and desires, intimately related as they are to the ideals of society and politics. The desire to foster humanitarian or liberal attitudes and emotions in people , or the capacities for, for instance, love, compassion, and truthfulness (as we often find reflected in discussions about children and their reading), are central to ideas about books

and literature for children, which are attributed with containing emotional values, and evoking emotional experiences and reactions, to an almost unique extent. We find clearly reflected in this context the idealism concerning the enlightening and ennobling functions of art and creativity, which encompasses the complexity of values and ideals anyone engaged in educating and raising children attempts to transfer and preserve.

I would argue that many expressions of children's literature's uses and criticism are related, firstly, to the marginal status of children's books within literary studies: and, secondly, to the attendant current ambivalent attribution of functions of children's books with regard to children. As Zohar Shavit points out, 'children's literature, unlike adult literature, [is] regarded as part of both the educational and the literary systems at one and the same time.'[11] Shavit here implies not only that this double attribution is a cause of debate and confusion within children's book criticism and use with respect to the functions it is trying to fulfil, but also points towards the definitions and uses of terms such as 'adult literature', which are placed in an area outside children's literature and children's literature criticism, and in particular relationships to it. Robert Leeson similarly reflects these issues when he writes that

> there is a great disagreement over criteria in children's literature ... If the criteria are jumbled, it is because children's literature is in a state of expansion and change greater than at any time in its history. To bring together these disparate elements will take time and effort.[12]

There are underlying assumptions in Leeson's explanation having to do with his views of the role and status of children's literature, children's book criticism, and

'adult' criticism.

It is my intention to examine, therefore, in this thesis, the realm of discussions about children's books at several levels: both with regard to discussions as they take place within this realm, and with regard to its relationships - implied, assumed, or desired - with those wider areas of ideas which allow it to define and recognize itself, and for it to be defined and recognized by articulating many kinds of differences and similarities to other fields of thought. It is not so much my intention, then, to offer 'solutions' to problems within children's book criticism, as to suggest some ways of thinking about what is involved when interested parties engage in writing, reading, or talking about 'children's books'.

Chapter One. Parameters and Perspectives of Discussion.

The origins of assigning certain books specifically to the domain of children's reading can be found in histories of the development of ideas about children and childhood. The concepts of 'child' and 'childhood' have been subject to different definitions throughout history and in varying cultures and social surroundings. There is no ontologically stable nation of 'the child'; beyond and around the basic biological dependency of the infant lie social and cultural constructions of the meaning and role of childhood and the child. Chris Jenks, in examining the sociology of childhood, points out that

> the difference between the [child and the adult] indicates the identity of each; the child cannot be imagined except in relation to a conception of the adult, but interestingly it becomes impossible to produce a well defined sense of the adult without first positing the child.[1]

Jenks gives some examples of the changing relationships between the 'adult' and the 'child', arguing that society continues to theorise about

> whether to regard children as pure, bestial, innocent, corrupt or even as we view our adult selves; whether they think and reason as we do, are immersed in a receding tide of inadequacy or are possessors of a clarity of vision which we have through experience lost...; whether they are constrained and we have achieved freedom, or we have assumed constraint and they are truly free.[2]

By way of defining and discussing the nature of children these adults are expressing,

formulating, and projecting ideals and ideas about themselves and the not-themselves. Children, in culture and history, have no such voice. In this, and other, respects, this engagement of the dominant concept of adulthood with that of childhood has strong parallels with Michel Foucault's interpretation of the role of insanity within society. In Madness and Civilization he writes that

> what is originative is the caesura that establishes the distance between reason and non-reason; reason's subjugation of non-reason, wresting from it its truth as madness, crime, or disease, derives explicitly from this point.[3]

'Childhood' does not perhaps carry such a heavy load of negative meaning as madness or insanity (though madness, too, has at times been held to be a privileged state of contact with the divine, or with unbearable knowledge or ecstasy), but it, too, functions as an exponent of the 'non-adult' and 'non-reason', and, similarly, childhood can speak - as 'the man of madness communicates with society ... by the intermediary of an equally abstract reason which is order, physical and moral constraint, the anonymous pressure of the group, the requirements of conformity'[4] - only through the memories, observations, or selections and interpretations of adults. Children's books operate in this realm of interpretive tension: in being assigned to children, these books are held to be one of the central repositories of what, at different times, in different places, are considered to be thoughts and emotions either present in, or lacking from, childhood. Children's books change as the interaction with historical and socio-cultural needs and ideas relating to childhood change, or different books move into or out of the category of 'children's books'. The shifts remain dependent on authors' and critics' notions of what they are and are not: in so far as aspects of both of these

sides are reflected in views of 'childhood' they are expressions of a wish to use children's books, either, or both, as a means of educating the 'non-adult' to conform to the 'adult', and/or as a means of articulating what is considered, hoped, or feared to be the 'non-adult' still in the adult; as a means of maintaining a pathway of contact and communication between the adult and the child without, or between the adult and the child within. Jacques Derrida writes:

> Man calls himself man only by drawing limits excluding his other from the play of supplementarity: the purity of nature, of animality, primitivism, childhood, madness, divinity. The approach to these limits is at once feared as a threat of death and desired as access to a life without differance. The history of man calling himself man is the articulation of all these limits among themselves. All concepts determining a non-supplementarity (nature, animality, primitivism, childhood, madness, divinity, etc.) have evidently no truth-value... They have meaning only within a closure of the game.[5]

In order to understand more clearly these relationships between adults, children's books, and children, let us begin by looking, firstly, a bit more closely at Philippe Ariès' classic arguments concerning the nature and development of ideas about, and attitudes towards, children, and then, secondly, go on to elaborate the implications of these ideas of 'childhood' as being an ontologically unstable concept by reviewing ideas about developments in specific views of the child as reader. Ariès argues that though 'men and women will always go on loving one another, will always go on having children, and will always go on guiding the first steps of those children'[6], these processes do not take place constantly in the same ways. He points out that 'the great demographic revolution in the West, from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, has revealed to us considerable possibilities of change in structures hitherto believed to be invariable because they were biological'.[7] The use of contraception,

Ariès argues, is one of the crucial factors that has allowed people to influence, quantitatively, and qualitatively, the nature of family life. The choices which the possibility of contraception, and, for instance, improving medical care and hygiene, introduced, also required further reflection on the structures and functions of the family. As Ariès says:

> For a long time it was believed that the family constituted the ancient basis of our society, and that, starting in the eighteenth century, the progress of liberal individualism had shaken and weakened it ... The study of modern demographic phenomena led me to a completely contrary conclusion. It seemed to me ... that on the contrary the family occupied a tremendous place in our industrial societies, and that it had perhaps never before exercised so much influence over the human condition ... The idea of the family appeared to be one of the great forces of our time.[8]

Ariès argues that the modern idea of the family acquires its force from having become 'a value, a theme of expression, an occasion of emotion'.[9]

And, he adds,

> our experience of the modern demographic revolution has revealed to us the importance of the child's role in this silent history. We know that there is a connection between the idea of childhood and the idea of the family ... That is why we are going to study them together'.[10]

Some writers have criticized Ariès' methods and ideas. Nicholas Tucker, for instance, argues that

> history tends to be male oriented ... and then it ... usually ... [describes] a remarkable child or ... a particular piece of educational propaganda. It is not altogether surprising that Ariès has sometimes been criticized for constructing his theory too much around a tiny, unrepresentative section of French society ... What is not always clear in his argument ... is whether children were once seen as mini-adults by everyone (even their mothers) or simply by the male adults mostly responsible for the surviving historical evidence ... mothers would certainly know that young children were markedly dissimilar from adults in many ways.[11]

Lloyd de Mause, similarly, claims that Ariès 'ignores voluminous evidence that medieval artists could, indeed, paint realistic children'[12], and that 'his etymological argument for a separate concept of childhood being unknown is also untenable'[13].

These criticisms, however, are unfounded: Ariès makes quite clear, in contrast to Tucker's assertions, that he is not writing about 'realities' (whatever they may be seen to be) of states of childhood dependency or lack of life experience, but that he is interested in the development of cultural and social ideas of 'family' and 'childhood' as carriers of social, moral, and ethical, values and motivations. As Ariès states right at the beginning of Centuries of Childhood: 'it is not so much the family as a reality that is our subject here as the family as an idea'.[14]

This is also clear in, for instance, Ariès' summing up of the historical development of the notion of childhood:

> No doubt the discovery of childhood began in the thirteenth century, and its progress can be traced in the history of art in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. But the evidence of its development became more plentiful and significant from the end of the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth ... In the moralists and pedagogues of the seventeenth century, we see that fondness for childhood and its special nature no longer found expression in amusement and 'coddling', but in psychological interest and moral solicitude.[15]

Even if de Mause were correct in his more detailed criticisms of Ariès' assessments of pictorial and etymological evidence (and he provides few concrete examples or proof), surely Ariès' point still stands solidly: throughout history the ideas pertaining to morality and ethics have shifted, and attitudes toward persons at the beginning of the life-cycle were subject to similar shifts and changes. Ariès is nowhere claiming that young humans were not seen to exist in one capacity or another: as he says,

'men and women ... will always go on guiding the first steps of those children'.[16] What he is trying to do is chart some of the changes in ideas of how and why which 'steps' should be guided, and their contexts:

> the point is that ideas entertained about these [family] relations may be dissimilar at moments separated by lengthy periods of time. It is the history of the idea of the family which concerns us here, not the description of manners or the nature of law .... The idea of childhood is not to be confused with affection for children: it corresponds to an awareness of the particular nature of childhood, that particular nature which distinguishes the child from the adult, even the young adult. In medieval society, this awareness was lacking.[17]

The story adults tell about a childhood which is largely mute itself determine its function and meaning within society.

In discussing childhood, then, not as a discovery so much as an invention, I am not, for the purposes of children's literature criticism, intending to supplant one definition of it with another. As Gayatri Spivak writes in her introduction to Jacques Derrida's Of Grammatology,

> this [Derrida's discussion of supplementarity] might seem an attractively truant world of relativism. But the fearful pleasure of a truant world is the sense of an authority being defied. That absolute ground of authority Derrida would deny.[18]

Similarly, in locating the functioning of many of the terms of children's book criticism within its refutations of the idea of discursive constructions of the concepts of 'childhood', I am concerned with precisely not suggesting yet other definitions or constitutive aspects of 'childhood', but in examining the terms of discussion as they operate. Though my readings of Derrida and like-minded theorists thus supply the theoretical context and perspective to my examination of 'children' and children's fiction criticism,

I do not want to claim that this is an effort to 'deconstruct' these ideas in Derridean terms, however, both because, it seems to me, this defeats Deconstruction and because I am aware I am not pursuing or formulating this discussion with an eye to fulfilling what I take to be the ultimate demands of Derridean philosophies. Derrida, and other philosophers and literary theorists 'write', despite their disavowals of 'writing' (which in these terms, as Spivak explains, designates 'an entire structure of investigation, not merely ... graphic notation on tangible material'[19]). In writing, in the narrow sense, Derrida argues, we recognize and repress 'the absence of the "author" and of the "subject- matter", interpretability, the deployment of a space and a time that is not "its own"'[20], but we ignore the fact, he says, that 'everything else is also inhabited by this structure of writing in general, that "the thing itself always escapes"'.[21] Thus Derrida is the first to acknowledge he is subject to Nietzsche's 'necessary lie' of creating a world not of becoming but of being, but this does not deter him from examining the terms of his own, and every other, 'lying'. I am also selectively applying this perspective, although I am not attempting to pursue the deconstruction of all the terms of the 'closure of the game' to the full in concentrating on narratives of 'children', 'adults' and 'literature' within the limits of this thesis.

Within the histories of ideas about children and childhood, then, we also find backgrounds to children's books and children's literature which writers on children's books seem to rely, and draw, on. These texts are linked to, and by, ideas of differences between stages of life: differences either of experience, of cognitive processes and abilities, or of types of consciousness, depending on the contextual notions surrounding childhood, childrearing, and education. In order for books and literature to be either developed specifically with children in mind, or to be considered as being somehow

related to children and childhood, ideas about those differences between adults and children which might particularly affect the nature and functions of reading needed to be in existence. The history of this area therefore impinges on, and is constructed of, aspects of the history of ideas about reading from both literary critical and psychological perspectives, developments in the ideas about education and childrearing, and the histories of political and socio-cultural ideals and ideas articulated through educational efforts and (children's) books. In order to examine the role of each of these histories with regard to the developments in the discussions surrounding children's books, it may be useful to separate some of the intertwined strands and concentrate, as much as possible, on some aspects in turn.

The area in which ideas about the nature of children and reading are most clearly articulated, as well as the motives for having an interest in children and reading, is the field of education. Henri-Irénée Marrou, in his discussion of Education in Antiquity defines 'education': 'l'education est la technique collective par laquelle une société initie sa jeune génération aux valeurs et aux techniques qui caractérisent la vie de sa civilisation'.[22] Frederick Beck argues that formal education in Greek schools or with tutors, which we may take as one of the main origins of Western educational and cultural traditions, grew out of the oral transmission in early Greek culture, in poetic form, of the 'history of the great deeds of man'.[23] Children would be taught the skills necessary to survival, such as hunting, agriculture, spinning, and cooking, through example and practice, but the process of storytelling became the means not only to, perhaps, amuse, but also to '[set] the standard of virtue which the community acknowledged and to which they would wish their children to conform'.[24] In so far as humans led a life beyond pure practical survival, but dealt with emotions,

some kind of self-consciousness, and inter-relationships on that basis, stories are the means to discuss both experiences of reality and symbolic life: values, morals, ideals. Ernst Cassirer describes this view of the role of language and storytelling when he writes that

> the functional circle of man is not only quantitatively enlarged; it has undergone a qualitative change. Man has, as it were, discovered a new method of adapting himself to his environment. Between the receptor system and the effector system, which are to be found in all animal species, we find in man a third link which we may describe as a 'symbolic system' ... a new dimension of reality ... No longer in a merely physical universe, man lives in a symbolic universe. Language, myth, art, and religion are part of this universe.[25]

Cassirer also warns that attempts to

> connect the fact of symbolism with other well-known and more elementary facts ... has become the bone of contention between the different metaphysical systems: between idealism and materialism, spiritualism and naturalism,[26]

and we will encounter aspects of these conflicts throughout this thesis; for the time being, however, we will limit ourselves to using Cassirer's point on the uses of language as a primary motive for the use of storytelling in child-rearing. Dilthey, by whom Cassirer is strongly influenced, formulates the idea as follows:

> the immense significance of literature for our understanding of spiritual life and history lies in the fact that the inner life of man finds its complete, exhaustive, and objectively comprehensible expression only in language. Hence the art of Verstehen centres on the exegesis or interpretation of the remains of human existence contained in writing.[27]

In taking the trouble to educate, in its broadest sense, children at all, the educators

are, of necessity, drawing on their own ideas and experiences. As Nietzsche wrote:

> we have to be stable in our beliefs if we are to prosper, we have made the 'real' world a world not of change, but one of being ... A world in a state of becoming could not, in a strict sense, be 'comprehended' or 'known'.[28]

It is these systems of necessary beliefs which are transferred from generation to generation.

Poetry is seen as becoming, in ancient times, fundamental to this telling of stories, because though informally the language of everyday speech is said to have been used to relate loose events, exploits, or fantasies, poetic forms are represented as developing in an oral culture as aids to memory in dispersing 'not only the tales of the gods and famous men but also the words of hymns and prayers and the details of ritual'[29], on a wider scale. Carpenter describes poetry in this sense as 'a specialized idiom of communication'.[30] Beck quotes Rohde as saying of the Greek Homeric world that 'if anyone did possess a monopoly of teaching it was, in this age when all the highest faculties of the spirit found their expression in poetry, the poet and the singer'.[31] It was those beliefs and practices which were important or of interest within a culture which were linked to communication through poetry and ritual, and on the basis of this idea the faith both in the capacity of poetry to educate, and in the importance of teaching poetry is explained: important or interesting beliefs and knowledge were encapsulated in poetry; poetry encapsulated important or interesting knowledge and beliefs. Out of those terms poetry developed its traditional description: Horace was one of the earlier writers to believe that 'poets aim either to do good or to give pleasure - or, thirdly, to say things which are both pleasing and serviceable

for life'.[32] Sir Philip Sidney famously restated this view in his 'Defense of Poesy':

> ...I speak to show that it is not rhyming and versing that maketh a poet - no more than a long gown maketh an advocate, who though he pleaded in armour should be an advocate and no soldier. But it is that feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching, which must be the right describing note to know a poet by, although indeed the senate of poets hath chosen verse as their fittest raiment ...: not speaking (table talk fashion or like men in a dream) words as they chanceably fall from the mouth, but peizing each syllable of each word by just proportion according to the dignity of the subject.[33]

It is this idea which lies at the heart of the fact that, as James Bowen tells us, 'the studia humanitatis, for more than two millennia, was dominant in the West, and it was within such a conceptual framework that all educational issues arose and solutions or compromises were reached'.[34]

I would like to argue that, based on a hierarchical model of the adult-child relationship, the narratives (in their widest sense: 'stories about life') adults attempt to convey to children are controlled and formed by this didactic impulse - explicitly or implicitly - and that the roots of allocating books (that is, criticism) to, and producing them for, children, lie in the efforts to educate. This is in contrast to what we will see to be a generally accepted use of the view that children's fiction is a category defined by, and originating from, a move away from didacticism, instruction, or education: that it is, in this sense, interpreted as being a liberator of children. As concepts of 'childhood' as other to 'adulthood' developed and became increasingly specific and detailed, however, so needs to comprehend and control this 'other' grew: it is, in this sense, a paradoxical development of ideas, with both aspects of the paradox inextricably implicated and involved with each other. As children were beginning to be 'discovered' (or invented) they were also simultaneously, and perhaps inevitably,

subjected to more specific attempts to 'conquer' and control them. Jacqueline Rose, in her book Peter Pan, or the Impossibility of Children's Fiction, argues this point forcefully with regard to children and reading:

> children's fiction rests on the idea that there is a child who is simply there to be addressed and that speaking to it might be simple. It is an idea whose innocent generality covers up a multitude of sins .... There is no child behind the category 'children's fiction', other than the one which the category itself sets in place, the one which it needs to believe is there for its own purposes.[35]

Rose suggests that children's fiction finds its roots in adults' attempts to suppress and restrain the 'child', and specifically its 'bisexual, polymorphous, perverse sexuality'[36], a strategy based on envy. In this sense, Rose attacks the notion of children's fiction as being based, consciously or unconsciously, on the adult authors' attempts to draw the child-readers into the book as an act of sexual seduction. The questions that are raised by Rose's argument are twofold: In the first place, Rose does not seem, to me, to fully explore the fact that her argument too is based on yet another ontology of 'childhood', based on psychoanalytic theory, in that she posits that children's fiction is based on the seduction and amalgamation of a childhood's 'perverse sexuality'. How can we distinguish this ontology from any other of the definitions of 'child' Rose herself claims are set into place by children's fiction 'for its own purposes'? In the second place Rose's interpretation of children's fiction as based on 'a multitude of sins', on suppression and seduction for its own purposes, allows no space for positive aspects of the concepts relating to 'childhood': education as protection and nurturing.

I would argue that in a society where the ontology of childhood - and its subsequent

symbolic weight and meaning - are developed and embedded to the current extent, we cannot step outside, or discard, the hierarchical ideology concerning the relationship between adults and children, either with respect to children's fiction, or the total perceived necessity to educate and raise children. The raising and educating of children is inevitably - in a society - a controlling and conforming exercise, in so far as any narrative operates describing the presiding in any way over the development of the 'child' into the 'adult'. Chris Jenks writes:

> the child is familiar to us and yet strange, ... he is essentially of ourselves and yet appears to display a different order of being: his serious purpose and our intentions towards him are meant to resolve that paradox by transforming him into an adult like ourselves.[37]

Though this hierarchy or domination of adults over children in Western society has its very dark sides, such as child abuse and neglect, child exploitation and misuse, and indoctrination, this structure also, I would argue, provides the only means of protection and nurturing necessary within a version of a society (whether or not it would be necessary to 'children' in some form of Utopia): without the benevolent aspects of adult care over children, the alternatives are children sleeping in cardboard boxes in streets, or three-year olds living off garbage-heaps, as we can see in some Third World countries, for instance. As members of a substratum of the structures of Western industrial society, the adults within the adult-child hierarchy do not have the option of withdrawing from their positions of power and responsibility with respect to children: their absence would, in that case, only constitute another form of use of power (as we saw Rousseau noting, even the freedom we give children is the product of an exercise of power). We must learn instead, to further examine the

adult-child hierarchy, and in constantly acknowledging the responsibility of power, determine what we want to do with it.

I will be attempting to show that, even if books are argued to have developed within a literary mode of narrative not dominated by the didactic impulse, even those children's books are subordinated to the efforts of the adult world to assimilate children to its values and motives by continued attempts to discern and define the influence of books on children, and to select and direct books for children with the previously determined aims in mind. Many critics of children's books, we shall see, have taken either a historical perspective on children's book studies, or have an interest stemming from a professed love of children's books, but do not tend to place much overt importance on the study of the ideas concerning education as a large component and powerful expression of the creation of the category of 'childhood', and thus of 'children's books', as well as an area within which explicit elements of the conventions of the adult narratives (in their widest sense) of children developed. This is because any attention that is directed towards the area of education has the precise aim of distancing children's fiction from it. Attention focuses on discussing schoolbooks, texts and primers with the primary aim of defining 'children's books' by contrasting them with, and separating them from, those overtly didactic texts. In other words, these are examinations concerned with establishing a literary genre. John Rowe Townsend, for instance, in his historical and critical overview Written for Children, draws this distinction between what are, as he sees it, purely moral and didactic treatises and schoolbooks and primers, and books intended also, or mainly 'to amuse'.[38] F.J. Harvey Darton also writes: 'by "children's books" I mean printed works produced ostensibly to give children spontaneous pleasure and not

primarily to teach them, nor solely to make them good, nor to keep them profitably quiet'.[39] Harvey Darton, in connection with this distinction argues that

> children's books, written as such, have been in England almost entirely a product of the largely domesticated middle-class, which began to exist, free of civil war, not wildly excited about religion nor very needful of political arts, but increasingly conscious and desirous of freedom, under the Hannoverian dynasty ... The reading-habit had come into middling social life, and the English novel was born. The microcosmos of children was to receive the reflection of this slow great change in the English character.[40]

Children's books, or at least their commercial production, are thus linked to the rise of the novel. As Harvey Darton adds: 'Children's books did not stand out by themselves as a clear but subordinate branch of English literature until the middle of the eighteenth century'[41], P.J. Buijnsters does include schoolbooks as long as the texts were originally intended for children or were, in time, read mainly by children.[42] We find, thus, two main distinctions being drawn by critics in an attempt to describe their basis of literary genre traits of modern children's fiction: between books written for children and for adults, and between books written to 'educate' children and books considered as being written to 'amuse' children. These distinctions are based on principles which generate enduring problems within children's book criticism, for both terms: to 'educate' and to 'amuse', are descriptions of the effects of texts on readers, and as such are the product of the *link* made between these texts and ontological notions of childhood. We are faced with the prevalence of reliance on the problematic acceptance of varying and changing ontologies of childhood.

In fact, I would argue, the claims of much children's literature criticism that it finds its origins in this 'adult literary criticism' are part and parcel of its attempts

to resolve its perceived problems relating to 'children as readers'. This 'adult literary criticism' is, within this context, a very particularized term, referring not so much to discussions within 'adult' literary criticism as such, but to a specific ideal 'criticism' which these children's literature critics aspire to: a criticism which is not an enduring consideration of the uses and best means, of teaching.

In order, then, to gain a greater understanding of children's books and children's book criticism, we must start 'before' these critics' 'educate' and 'amuse' divide, and examine the principles which underlie their ideas pertaining to reading in relation to ideas of 'childhood'.

Chapter Two: The 'Child' As Reader Within Texts on Liberal Arts Education.

It is the educational theories and ideals, as told of beginning with the Greeks and Romans, and then adopted and adapted in part by the medieval Church, that still form much of the basic vocabulary for discussing Western education and the role of reading for children within it today as James Bowen explained. I will therefore continue tracing some of the ideas as they are applied within this overtly educational framework in relation to children and reading. As Marrou points out, any discussion starting with a consideration of any aspect of education in Greek culture begins with Homer: 'son témoignage est la plus ancien document que nous puissions utilement interroger sur l'education archaïque'.[1] In Homer, we are told, we can find both reflections of views on the need for and nature of, education, as well as considering the role the Iliad and the Odyssey played in being used to educate. Beck discusses both these aspects when he writes:

> from the evidence of Homer, we may conclude that there were in times prior to Homer teachers providing some sort of general education by individual instruction as well as men of specialist knowledge who taught their speciality to selected pupils. These, together with the poets and the mythology, constituted the educational background of the times.[2]

'The development of character', Beck contends, 'was the chief objective of Epic education.'[3] In the ninth book of the Iliad Phoenix' speech to Achilles illustrates some of the educational ideals for raising a hero:

> the old horseman Peleus sent me out with you on the day when he sent you from Phthia to join Agamemnon - you were a child, with

> no knowledge yet of levelling war or of debate, where men win distinction. So he sent me out to teach you all these things, to make you a speaker of words and a doer of deeds.[4]

In Homer a picture develops, Beck argues, of character development through the guidance of an elder, through association with different types of men, and through travel and experience. The aim of this broad education was to become a fit leader, a 'speaker of words and a doer of deeds'. These were the attributes which were sought after in the Homeric aristocratic society of warrior heroes and kings. As Marrou suggests,

> l'education est donc un phénomène secondaire et subordonné par rapport à celle-ci [la vie de sa civilisation] dont, normalement, elle représente comme un résumé et une condensation ... Cela suppose évidemment un certain décalage dans le temps: il faut d'abord qu'une civilisation atteigne sa propre forme avant de pouvoir engendrer l'education qui la reflétera.[5]

Marrou's emphasis here lies with a formative role of society on education, but he sees that education also plays a role in shaping society. This circular process continues to operate in the discussion of education both as a means of producing change within society and culture and as a conservative force, preserving and passing on established society and culture. This interactive process also plays a part in the histories of the child as reader.

Education directed toward the development of character is said to continue throughout the development of Greek society. Beck lists among 'those aspects which seem quite essential to a definition of the schools of Athens'[6]
that 'the education provided was cultural, not technical, directed towards character training and citizenship, not towards craftsmanship and personal profit'.[7] This educational

ideal is even more pronounced in Sparta, where boys were taken from home and trained communally through vigorous physical education. But although Sparta provides a strong example of the functions of socialization and acculturation through education, it is, we are told, a side-track in terms of education through reading. Marrou points out that

> Cité avant tout militaire et aristocratique, Sparta n'ira jamais bien clair dans la voie qui devait aboutir à ce que j'ai appelé l'<<éducation de scribe>>: elle mettra au contraire son point d'honneur à reste une ville de semi-illettrés.[8]

The Athenian <<education de scribe>>, Beck argues, was affected in the fifth and sixth centuries by the demand for training in letters, due to the growth in trade. He suggests that

> the newer, more utilitarian study, that of letters, became affected by the aristocratic ideals and methods and was taught, not as a technique, but as a discipline. Letters were taught in conjunction with and by means of the study of Homer and the other great poets, apart from the lyrists. The demand for letters thus became engulfed in the current of general, cultural education instead of promoting the growth of scribe schools and a scribe class.[9]

This point is crucial to the views on the development of education with respect to poetry and literature in general for our purposes: the discipline and study of letters becomes associated with a cultural education restricted to the aristocratic classes who did not need to work or possess only utilitarian skills. Education through the literary arts, as well as through physical education, music, painting, and rhetoric, grew in prominence. Likewise, the link made here between social class and type of education, especially the reservation of the literary arts to a privileged class, is told of as being a strong influence throughout many histories of children and reading.

Kenneth Freeman describes the system of primary education in Athens by this time (from around the beginning of the sixth century) as

> consisting of three parts ... The grammatistes taught reading, writing, and some arithmetic, and made his pupils read and learn by heart the great poets, Homer and Hesiod and others.[10]

The other two parts consisted of the musical and physical aspects of education, with sometimes the addition of drawing and painting from late on in the fourth century. Formal education seems to have started around the age of six, and though Freeman mentions Plato 'recommending the deferral of the learning of letters to the age of ten'[11], the three basic subjects seem to have started at the same time. Quite young children, then, are said to have been reading the great poets. Plato describes this in his Protagoras, through the words of Protagoras (c.490-420) (whom Taylor describes as 'the first professional sophist, i.e. itinerant professor of higher education ... He aimed to teach upper-class youths how to obtain personal and political success, putting considerable emphasis on skill in speech and argument'[12]):

> No Socrates, you ought to realize that they [good men] begin when their children are small, and go on teaching and correcting them as long as they live. For as soon as a child can understand what is said to him, his nurse and his mother and his teacher and his father himself strive to make him as good as possible, teaching and showing him by every word and deed that this is right, and that wrong, this good and that bad, this holy and that unholy, 'do this' and 'don't do that'. If he obeys voluntarily, so much the better; if not, they treat him like a piece of wood which is getting warped and crooked, and straighten him out with threats and beatings. And then when they send him to school they tell the teachers to pay much more attention to the children's behaviour than to their letters or their music. The teachers do that, and then when they have learned their letters and are going on to understand the written word, just as they did with speech before, they set before them at their desks the works of good poets to read, and make them learn them by heart; they contain a lot of exhortation,

> and many passages praising and eulogizing good men of the past, so that the child will be fired with enthusiasm to imitate them, and filled with the desire to become a man like that ... The people who are best able to do it I mean, the wealthiest - do this especially...[13]

It should be noted that this passage occurs within a discussion between Protagoras and Socrates on the possibility of teaching 'excellence', and what this 'excellence' is, and the role of this kind of teaching in the existence of the city-state.

However, Plato prescribes his own Laws as the set text for the education of children in his projected ideal state:

> ...I haven't got far to look for a model [text]... this discussion of ours ... well, it's come to look, to my eyes, just like a literary composition ... Its these that have impressed me as being the most eminently acceptable and the most entirely appropriate for the ears of the younger generation ... Its [the Guardian of the Laws in charge of education] first job will be to compel the teachers to learn this material and speak well of it .... he should employ only those who endorse his own high opinion.[14]

Plato had few doubts that texts read in childhood could help to provide the citizens of his ideal state with the correct frame of mind:

> What we have in mind is education from childhood in virtue, a training which produces a keen desire to become a perfect citizen who knows how to rule and be ruled as justice demands. Suppose we should want to mark off this sort of training from others and reserve the title 'education' for it alone. A training directed to acquiring money or a robust physique, or even to some intellectual facility not guided by reason and justice, we should want to call coarse and illiberal, and say that it had no claim whatever to be called education.[15]

Reading the Laws was only part of preparing citizens for his ideal state: Plato also gives directives on the use of music, dancing and wrestling, and arithmetic and astronomy. Comedy is spoken of in very disapproving accents, and tragedies may not be performed unless they comply in their doctrines with those of the state.[16] Though these rules

were designed to help construct Plato's ideal state, these, and Plato's comments in the Protagoras, lead Beck to conclude that literature was, in fact, studied primarily by young pupils 'as the basis of moral training, as providing examples of noble conduct to be admired or emulated. Studies of literature as literature were reserved for older students'.[17]

Reading the great poets thus seems to have been regarded as part of a moral education, geared towards educating certain children to be able to play their part as citizens of the Greek city-state. Davidson reminds us that this later Greek education was intended only for the few,

> for the wealthy and well-born ... The subjects of education were the sons of full citizens, themselves preparing to be full citizens, and to exercise all the functions of such. The duties of such persons were completely summed up under two heads, duties to the family and duties to the state ... The former included the three relations of husband to wife, father to children, and master to slaves and property; the latter, three public functions, legislative, administrative, and judiciary.[18]

The great poets are seen as having been used to educate the children for this purpose because they were held to describe high and noble deeds and men in the best suited form.

The primary writers on Greek education in the Athenian democracy of around the fourth century B.C., like Plato, can thus be held to reflect concerns with the role of education in relation to the state in their works, including the specific part reading could play. Plato's assigning of his Laws as the reading for children in his state is related to his doubts about the possible effects of some of the sections of great poetry, as he sets them out in, for instance, Book II of The Republic. In a discussion between Adeimantus and Socrates, Adeimantus argues that 'Fathers,

when they address exhortations to their sons, and all those who have others in their charge, urge the necessity of being just',[19] and he gives examples of Hesiod and Homer describing the blessings that will accrue to the just person. But, he then continues to point out:

> Consider further, Socrates, another kind of language about justice and injustice employed by both laymen and poets. All with one accord reiterate that soberness and righteousness are fair and honourable, to be sure, but unpleasant and laborious, while licentiousness and injustice are pleasant and easy to win and are only in opinion and by convention disgraceful.[20]

Adeimantus asks:

> What Socrates, do we suppose is the effect of all such sayings about the esteem in which men and gods hold virtue and vice upon the souls that hear them, the souls of young men who are quick-witted and capable of flitting, as it were, from one expression of opinion to another and inferring from them all the character and the path whereby a man would lead the best life?[21]

The poets are authorities and teachers to the young men, and they may follow their writings in undesirable ways.[22] Adeimantus uses this presupposition to coax from Socrates an argument on the inherent superiority of justice, and these lines also reveal that, in allowing for the poets' work as being a force in education, an authority and source of moral exempla, it may equally come to be seen as a force detrimental to the ideals set out by the educators.

In their following discussion, Socrates spells out this ambiguity to Adeimantus in considering the education of a 'true guardian of the state'[23]:

> under music you include tales, do you not? ... And tales are of two species, the one true and the other false? ... And education must make use of both, but first of the false ... Don't you understand ... that we

> begin by telling children fables, and the fable is, taken as a whole, false, but there is truth in it also.[24]

Socrates argues that

> the beginning in every task is the chief thing, especially for any creature that is young and tender. For it is then it is best moulded and takes the impression that one wishes to stamp upon it.[25]

Plato's point here seems to be that books for children should be censored, so that mothers and nurses will tell only approved stories to the children 'and so shape their souls'.[26] This is obviously the same attitude displayed in his educational discussion in the Laws. In The Republic Plato has Socrates particularly criticise those passages in the poets which deal with the mythology of the gods, because if the gods themselves are depicted as displaying undesirable traits or behaviour, there is no higher authority left to convince people of the need for certain types of ideas and actions above others. This criticism of mythology is a conventional 'topos' throughout writings in Classical Antiquity. When Adeimantus asks for more details of what virtuous poems would be like, Socrates replies:

> Adeimantus, we are not poets, you and I at present, but founders of a state. And to founders it pertains to know the patterns on which poets must compose their fables and from which their poems must not be allowed to deviate; but the founders are not required themselves to compose fables.[27]

As we have seen, Plato does take this step in the Laws. Socrates continues, in The Republic, by spelling out what ideals for the state should be reflected in poetry, and what should be barred, but the main argument is more than clear:

> whatever opinions are taken into the mind at that age are wont to

> prove indelible and unalterable. For which reasons, maybe, we should do our utmost that the first stories that they hear should be so composed as to bring the fairest lessons of virtue to their ears.[28]

James Bowen adds, however, that Plato believes this learning should not be coerced because free men should not have to learn under duress, and because 'compulsory learning never sticks in the mind ... let your children's lessons take the form of play. You will learn more about their natural abilities that way'.[29]

Aristotle's writings, like those of Plato and other Greeks discern a large role for the state and society in the life of man:

> it [Supreme Good] must be the object of the most authoritative of the sciences - some science which is pre-eminently a master-craft. But such is manifestly the science of Politics; for it is this that ordains which of the sciences are to exist in states, and what branches of knowledge the different classes of the citizens are to learn, and up to what point.[30]

But Aristotle says straight away that this is not a suitable subject of study for the young, 'for they have no experience of life and conduct, and it is these that supply the premises and subject matter of this branch of philosophy',

and

> moreover they are led by their feelings ... And it makes no difference whether they are young in years or immature in character: the defect is not a question of time, it is because their life and its various aims are guided by feeling.[31]

Though the science itself, then, is of no use to the young, Aristotle's ideas on education, and so education through reading also, are shaped by his ideas of Politics and the attainment of Supreme Good to which this science aspires.

Aristotle, like Plato, places great, though not exclusive, importance in the

role of the environment in acquiring virtue:

> Virtue being ..., of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue is for the most part both produced and increased by instruction, and therefore requires experience and time; whereas moral and ethical virtue is the product of habit .... The virtues therefore are engendered in us neither by nature nor yet in violation of nature; nature gives us the capacity to receive them, and this capacity is brought to maturity by habit.[32]

This view attributes, therefore, an important role to teaching and the subsequent practice of desirable behaviours:

> It is therefore not of small moment whether we are trained from childhood in one set of habits or another; on the contrary it is of very great, or rather of supreme, importance.[33]

But

> theory and teaching are not, I fear, equally efficacious in all cases: the soil must have been previously tilled if it is to foster the seed, the mind of the pupil must have been prepared by the cultivation of habits.[34]

The best way to ensure this happens, Aristotle claims, is to have the raising of the young regulated by law, as well as society in general. He does say, though, that, lacking a system of public regulation, informal laws will do:

> Moreover individual treatment is better than a common system, in education as in medicine ... But any director can best treat a particular person if he has a general knowledge of what is good for everybody, or for other people of the same kind.[35]

Aristotle argues in the Politics that the aim of education specifically must be to educate for peace and for leisure. This discussion of Aristotle's explains much

of the basic reasonings in favour of a 'liberal arts' education over an education primarily consisting of training in skills or technical matters. As James Bowen points out, this issue is still of fundamental relevance to modern Western education: 'there is the rivalry between liberal and technical education with their respective antagonists considering the former a meaningless and decadent social ideal, the latter an illiberal and mindless kind of vocational training'.[36] Aristotle advocates a liberal arts education for all free people: in his state the rulers are to be older men, while young people will be ruled over, rather than there being a select class of rulers from the start:

> it is clear that it would be better for the same persons always to be rulers and subjects once for all; but this is not easy to secure, and as we do not find anything corresponding to the great difference that Scylax states to exist between kings and subjects in India, it is clear that for many reasons it is necessary for all to share alike in ruling and being ruled in turn.[37]

Aristotle reasons that this education for all freemen, then, must be directed towards producing good men, and he proceeds to explain how this should happen. According to his division of man's soul into the irrational and the rational, Aristotle asserts 'the rational part is better than the irrational'.[38] Within this rational part there is also a hierarchy: practical reason is better than irrational passions amenable to reason, and theoretic reason is better than practical reason. Aristotle then argues that

> the activities of the part of the soul that is by nature superior must be preferable ...; since that thing is always most desirable for each person which is the highest to which it is possible for him to attain.[39]

He then adds that

> also life as a whole is divided into business and leisure, and war and peace, and our actions are aimed some of them at things necessary and useful, others at things noble. In these matters the same principal of preference that applies to the parts of the soul must apply also to the activities of those parts: war must be for the sake of peace, business for the sake of leisure, things necessary and useful for the purpose of things noble.[40]

Because of this, Aristotle says, man should 'be capable of engaging in business and war, but still more capable of living in peace and leisure'[41], and this forms his educational aim for both children and adults.

Aristotle supports his arguments by claiming the failure of the Spartan constitution and education, which were directed towards conquest and war. He then outlines the virtues necessary to business and to leisure: both must be cultivated, but, again, those suitable to leisure (love of wisdom, temperance, and justice) more than those of business:

> the young must be taught those useful arts that are indispensably necessary; but it is clear that they should not be taught all the useful arts, those pursuits that are liberal being kept distinct from those that are illiberal and that they must participate in such among the useful arts as will not render the person who participates in them vulgar. A task and also an art or a science must be deemed vulgar if it renders the body or soul or mind of free men useless for the employments and actions of virtue.[42]

All activities which deteriorate the condition of the body, or which earn wages are illiberal, 'for they make the mind preoccupied and degraded'.[43] Even 'liberal' studies become 'illiberal' if they are studied too devotedly, or simply because of the pressure from other people, rather than studying them 'for the sake of oneself or one's friends, or on moral grounds'.[44] Aristotle specifies in some detail how lives must be led to be conducive to virtue through the liberal arts. Amongst many suggestions, he also

writes that

> the question of the kinds of tales and stories that should be told to children ... must be attended to by the officials called Children's Tutors. For all such amusements should prepare the way for their later pursuits.[45]

Reading and writing may be taught, because although they are utilitarian,

> some of the useful subjects as well ought to be studied by the young not only because of their utility, like the study of reading and writing, but also because they can lead on to many other branches of knowledge.[46]

In discussing the teaching of music, Aristotle also claims that

> one must not make amusement the object of the education of the young; for amusement does not go with learning - learning is a painful process[47,]

but concedes that 'the young owing to their youth cannot endure anything not sweetened by pleasure'.[48] Aristotle, like Plato, thus explicitly directs the education of children according to the virtues they deem essential to the attainments of their respectively envisaged ideal States. With respect specifically to children and reading, Plato more strictly censors the poets in relation to detrimental effects they may have on future citizenship, while Aristotle is less specific, but recommends that the examples stories form for young children should be controlled, but reading and writing taught as skills necessary to higher liberal knowledge in later life.

The last of the Greek theorists whom I will discuss is Isocrates (436-338 B.C.), whose theories are said to have been of great influence, though different to those of Plato and Aristotle. George Norlin tells us that Dionysius reports Isocrates as being the most illustrious teacher of his time, and that he made his school the 'image

of Athens'.[49] Norlin writes that

> the ablest young men of Athens and of Hellas came to study under him ... And few if any of the literary men of his age, whether or not they were members of his school, were unaffected by his influence.[50]

Isocrates was most interested in oratory: the aim of his higher education was the cultivation of the art of discourse, of which Norlin says:

> in ... Isocrates ... discourse ... is both the outward and the inward thought; it is not merely the form of expression, but reason, feeling, and imagination as well; it is that by which we persuade others and by which we persuade ourselves; it is that by which we direct public affairs and by which we set our own house in order ... The art of discourse may, therefore, be as broad as the whole life of civilised man; and this is just what Isocrates insisted that it should be.[51]

In his treatises 'Against the Sophists' and the 'Antidosis' Isocrates sets out his ideas about education, the role of education, and the roles of reading and literature. Isocrates places a slightly different emphasis on the importance of education than do Plato and Aristotle:

> For ability, whether in speech or in any other activity, is found in those who are well endowed by nature and have been schooled by practical experience. Formal training makes such men more skilful and more resourceful in discovering the possibilities of a subject ... But it cannot fully fashion men who are without natural aptitude into good debaters or writers, although it is capable of leading them on to self-improvement ... In the education of an orator I should answer that natural ability is paramount and comes before all else.[52]

Isocrates thus takes greater account of the influence of 'natural aptitude' in shaping an orator (in the broad sense, indicated by Norlin) in an intellectual sphere as well as that of character or virtue: 'let no one suppose that I claim that just living can be taught; for, in a word, I hold that there does not exist an art of the kind which

can implant sobriety and justice in depraved natures'.[53] He does feel, however, that 'the study of political discourse can help more than any other thing to stimulate and form such qualities of character',[54] and that hard work and application, and a course of study with a great master, are important. The study of oratory itself was reserved for young men, not children, but children's education was to prepare them for this higher study. Isocrates claims that, in this preparation on a secondary level, 'teachers who are skilled in disputation and ... astronomy and geometry and studies of that sort do not injure but, on the contrary, benefit their pupils, not so much as they profess, but more than others give them credit for'.[55] A middle course is advocated: these disciplines provide 'a gymnastic of the mind and a preparation for philosophy'[56], while, on the primary level 'that which boys in school pursue'[57], the same sort of thing happens: 'for they also when they have laboured through their lessons in grammar, music [including poetry], and the other branches, are not a whit advanced in their ability to speak and deliberate on affairs, but they have increased their aptitude for mastering greater and more serious studies'.[58]

Isocrates seems not so much concerned with teaching the substance and detail of virtue, honesty, and general good citizenship, but in studies which develop insight:

> it is not in the nature of man to attain a science by the possession of which we can know positively what we should do or what we should say ... I hold that man to be wise who is able by his powers of conjecture to arrive generally at the best course.[59]

Thus, he claims, the Athenian 'flexibility of mind and love of letters, contribute in no small degree to the education of the orator'.[60]

To Isocrates, in sum, an education, in the early years, was based on subjects

which would be of no use in older life in themselves, but which could prepare the mind of youngsters to start studying oratory, which would, in turn, help them to become 'educated' men, by which Isocrates meant not those trained in 'arts, sciences and specialities', but those who have a character in accord with virtues associated with good causes and decent behaviour.[61] Tantalisingly, he also mentions that

> as to the poetry of Homer and Hesiod and the rest ... I think I could silence those who chant their verses and prate about these poets in the Lyceum[62],

but this promise is never further explained.

I have presented Plato, Aristotle, and Isocrates' ideas on education in some detail because their concerns and topics are restated throughout, and are attributed with forming the basis of, the narrative of Western education, including education and reading. As I argued earlier, the history of education includes the earliest formulations of ideas about children and reading, and wider attitudes towards the ways and means of educating children, as well as analyses of why children should be educated, and to what purpose. To the Greeks I have considered reading poetry is often said to have been primarily intended as a source of moral and cultural education for young children. Plato clearly discerns the possible negative influence this reading may have, and provides for it by advocating censorship. Aristotle indicates that he agrees with this. Isocrates suggests reading helps to prepare the mind for the study of oratory. All three display the central concern with the connection between the individual and the state: above all, man is a citizen, and must be trained to fulfil his role as a citizen. The virtues of man are those traits which are relevant to the stability and prosperity of the society of the state: virtues such as justice, concern for the common

good, honesty, and diplomacy. Plato, Aristotle, and Isocrates all regard children as being born with as yet uncontrolled desires, and therefore a proclivity towards fulfilling those desires, and gaining pleasure. Education must play its part in teaching self-control and character, as well as intellectual disciplines. They attribute different degrees of importance to natural ability or talent, though all three observe that children come to education with certain diverse characteristics and abilities, and discuss how this should be approached: by advocating optimal methods of training, whether through practice, habit, or hard work. In the uses of these terms, the Greeks are thus seen to establish the parameters for the continuing discussions throughout the history of the child as reader and children's books: the roles of the state and society in deciding the aims of education; the definitions of virtue and morality within society; the nature of the influence of reading; and the methods best suited to the raising and teaching of children.

The concerns and ideals of the Greeks continued through histories by becoming a strong influence on, and adapted within, Roman culture. As Marrou points out:

> Cas particulier du fait fondamental qui domine tout l'histoire de la civilisation romaine: une civilisation autonome proprement italienne n'a pas eu le temps de se développer parce que Rome et l'Italie se sont trouvées integrées dans l'air de la civilisation grecque.[63]

Early Roman education, Gwynn and Bowen suggest, was formed by the community's originally agricultural roots, and by the traditions of 'patria potestas' and the 'mos maiorum'. Gwynn quotes Gaius who writes that 'the right of dominion which we have over our children is peculiar to the citizens of Rome'.[64] A Roman father, it is pointed out, decided whether a child would be accepted into the family or be

exposed to die, and held all his son's property during his lifetime. Gwynn, Bonner, Marrou and Bowen attribute the early Roman habit of educating children within the family circle to the patriarchal structure and agricultural life: once Rome started to expand and conquer fathers would be away in military service. In early Rome, says Gwynn, 'little book- learning was required for ordinary life'.[65] The earliest uses of reading for children were to learn the Twelve Tables of Roman Law, a civil code of law 'resting heavily upon the respect for tradition and custom expressed in the "mos maiorum"'.[66] Cicero is quoted as reporting the custom that all children had to learn the Twelve Tables by heart, and, somewhat later in time, Marcus Cato read them with his son and also took 'the trouble to write out, in large and extremely legible letters, stories from the early history of Rome, so that the boy may become familiar from the outset with the ancient traditions of his country'.[67] Reading, as with the Greeks, was a utilitarian skill necessary to administration and trade, but beyond that became one of the means of passing on the cultural and moral traditions of the ruling classes of the state. Marrou writes:

> Pratiquement, l'education morale du jeune Romain etait, comme celle du Grec, alimentée par un choix d'exemples offerts à son admiration; mais ils étaient empruntés à l'histoire nationale, et non à la poésie héroique; qu'en fait beaucoup de ces exempla fussent légendaires importe peu: c'est comme historiques qu'ils étaient présentés et revécus.[68]

Some 'poésie héroique' was taught, however, under the influence of the Greeks. Gwynn writes that the older, pragmatic tradition of Roman education gave way to the new Graeco-Roman culture:

> an ideal of culture which included Greek literature, rhetoric, and philosophy ... The circumstances of the change were due to the influence of half

> a dozen distinguished Greeks who came to Rome during the second and third centuries B.C.[69]

Tutors were engaged to teach young aristocrats Greek language and literature, and one of the earliest known of these was Livius Andronicus (± 250 B.C.), who translated the Odyssey into Saturnian verse, and this 'remained a standard textbook in Roman schools right down to Horace's day'.[70]

In many respects, then, Greek and Roman attitudes to education and reading are claimed to have been very similar. Education, especially a literary education, was intended for the children of the aristocracy, who were escorted by a slave to their school. A literary education was designed for those citizens who would play a role in public life: the 'artes liberales' were closely linked to the 'artes urbanae' (oratory, rhetoric, and jurisprudence). Cicero, in his De Oratore, argues:

> In my opinion, indeed no man can be an orator possessed of every praiseworthy accomplishment, unless he has attained the knowledge of everything important, and of all liberal arts, for his language must be ornate and copious from knowledge, since unless there be beneath the surface matter understood and felt by the speaker, oratory becomes an empty and almost puerile flow of words.[71]

The influence of Isocrates' ideas can be observed here: the education of an orator prepares him to lead a life concerned with serving public life with integrity, not just superficial well-spoken words. And, like Isocrates, Cicero regards oratory as the highest of all arts. Quintilian, named as the other great Roman educationalist, agreed with Cicero: 'For myself, as I consider that nothing is unnecessary to the art of oratory, without which it must be confessed that an orator cannot be formed, and that there is no possibility of arriving at the summit of any thing without previous

initiatory efforts'.[72] Quintilian undertakes to explain how the education of an orator should be regulated, because 'I shall not shrink from stooping to those lesser matters, the neglect of which leaves no place for greater'.[73] James Bowen explains that oratory in Rome, as in Greece, was so highly relevant because: 'Public life in Rome, as in Athens before it, was essentially verbal and face-to-face; there was little book-learning, libraries were rudimentary, and, since affairs of state were conducted orally wherever possible, ability to marshal ideas and present them clearly and persuasively was a marked advantage'.[74]

Quintilian, in his Institutio Oratoriae, sets out, as he promised, the education of an orator from the very beginning. Again education is explicitly moral as well as intellectual: 'We are to form, then, the perfect orator, who cannot exist unless as a good man'.[75] Isocrates' voice is also heard in Quintilian's statement

> that precepts and treatises on art are of no avail without the assistance of nature; and these instructions, therefore, are not written for him to whom talent is wanting any more than treatises on agriculture for barren ground,[76]

and talent and

> other natural aids, as power of voice, a constitution capable of labour, health, courage, gracefulness ... are of no profit in themselves without a skilful teacher, persevering study, and great and continued exercise in writing, reading, and speaking.[77]

Quintilian, like Plato, argues that 'we are by nature most tenacious of what we have imbibed in our infant years'[78], and, as he believes children learn language and morals 'by imitation', he warns that a child's nurses should

> not be ungrammatical ... to their morals, doubtless, attention is first

to be paid, but let them also speak with propriety.[79]

Greek is recommended as the first language to learn, as Quintilian says Latin learning is derived from Greek culture, but Latin must be taught soon after, to prevent mispronunciations and misuse of idiom.[80]

Quintilian discusses the age at which learning should begin at length. He acknowledges the Greek idea that formal learning should begin at the age of seven, but argues that 'why should not that age be under the influence of learning, which is now confessedly subject to moral influence?'[81], and hence he advocates teaching from infancy:

> Yet I am not so unacquainted with differences of age, as to think that we should urge those of tender years severely, or exact a full complement of work from them; for it will be necessary, above all things, to take care lest the child should conceive a dislike to the application which he cannot yet love .... Let his instruction be an amusement to him; let him be questioned, and praised; and let him never feel pleased that he does not know a thing; and sometimes, if he is unwilling to learn, let another be taught before him, of whom he may be envious. Let him strive for victory now and then, and generally suppose that he gains it; and let his powers be called forth by rewards, such as that age prizes.[82]

Quintilian here shows that he, again, agrees with those Greeks who saw that the learning of young children must be 'sweetened by pleasure'.

Quintilian also considers the mechanics of learning to read with quite a detailed theory of cognitive development. He professes to be displeased at the apparently widespread practice of teaching children 'the names and order of the letters before they learn their shapes'.[83] He asserts that

> this method hinders their recognition of them [letters], as, while they follow their memory that takes the lead, they do not fix their attention on the forms of the letters .... it will be best for children, therefore, to be taught the appearances and names of the letters at once, as

they are taught those of men.[84]

Approval is also given to providing children with ivory figures of letters to play with, and with a board with the letters cut out of it, so that the child can learn to write by tracing the grooves. The next step, in reading, is to teach the syllables, and 'not to hurry on, in order to make it continuous or quick, until the clear and certain connexion of the letters become familiar'.[85] Words can then be formed from the syllables, and phrases from words. Quintilian argues that children must have plenty of time to perfect these skills, so that the child will feel secure in reading, and have learned to read aloud while anticipating what follows.

Finally Quintilian discusses reading matter itself. He recommends that children be taught

> not common words ... such as perpetually occur. For he may readily learn the explanations of obscure terms ... while some other occupation is before him, and acquire, amidst his first rudiments, a knowledge of that which would afterwards demand a special time for it.[86]

It is also desirable that 'even the lines, which are set him for his imitation in writing, should not contain useless sentences, but such as convey some moral instruction'.[87] These moral sayings were regarded as helpful in forming character and Quintilian recommends children now learning 'the sayings of eminent men, and select passages, chiefly from the poets (for the reading of poets is more pleasing to the young), in his play-time'.[88] Quintilian here provides a linking of designations of reading-matter to the young with amusement in saying that the reading of poetry 'is more pleasing to the young'.[89]

One of the subjects Quintilian also considers in detail is how to read in the

sense of 'declamation': this pertains to the reading of poetry. In this section Quintilian mentions the authors children may read because they are morally good. Reading begins with Homer and Virgil: 'let the mind of the pupil be exalted with the sublimity of the heroic verse, conceive ardour from the magnitude of the subjects, and be imbued with the noblest sentiments'.[90] Tragedies and lyric poets were regarded as beneficial by Quintilian, though he warns that some lyric poetry is licentious and should be guarded against. Elegies dealing with love, hendeca-syllables, and poems with sections of Sotadic verse are to be avoided, as they deal with obscene subjects.[91] Comedy is also good 'as it extends to all sorts of characters and passions'.[92] Quintilian apparently differentiates between writings which 'nourish the mind'[93] and 'enlarge the thinking powers'[94] and those which 'relate merely to erudition'[95]. The latter, he says, can always be read later in life, 'for the love of letters, and the benefit of reading, are bounded, not by the time spent at school, but by the extent of life'.[96] Highly recommended are Ennius, Accius, Pacuvius, Lucilius, Terence and Coecilius: poets who need to be learned to show the learning of the orators, and to give pleasure to the hearers, who need relief from 'the want of elegance in forensic pleading'[97]. Throughout his comments on reading, Quintilian, like the Greeks, can be seen to keep a sharp eye on his goal: to train an orator. He consistently points out the oratorical qualities readings may confer: they may supply a 'copia verborum'; 'a weightiness of thought', or 'elegance' to speakers[98]. He recommends that boys learn

> to relate orally the fables of Aesop, which follow next after the nurse's stories, in plain language ... and afterwards to express the same simplicity in writing.[99]

In the same way, he feels beginners should read the best authors at once, but choosing

those 'clearest in style and most intelligible'[100]; recommending Livy, for instance, to be read by boys rather than Sallust, who, however, 'is the greater historian, but to understand him there is need of some proficiency'.[101] Cicero is also 'agreeable even to beginners, and sufficiently intelligible'.[102]

I have quoted Quintilian to a considerable extent not only because his work is perceived as showing the strong continued influence of Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, and Greek thinking in general, and not only because he is said to be a great further influence in his own right, but also because the very detail of these comments and theories on reading for children will be seen to be repeated and used up to the present day. There are shifts in reading materials: subjects approved of in moral and religious terms change, as do ideas about what (some) children enjoy or learn more easily, but, mostly, this type of reasoning and assumptions appear in similar forms in many writings on 'children's books'. Quintilian especially shows how reading and children in education are in this way discussed with much less reference to political and social purpose and context than in Plato and Aristotle for instance.

There are many changes pointed out in higher education from the time of Quintilian onward (first century A.D.).[103] Bowen writes that by the sixth century Roman education, based previously on inquiry and discussion on the Greek model, had been reduced to the memorisation of the contents of compendia:

> the educational justification advanced by Capella that the liberal arts are a complete approach to knowledge providing both the means of organization (the 'trivium' of grammar, rhetoric and philosophy) and the content into which knowledge is systematically organized (the 'quadrivium' of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music) was largely lost on those who read it .... In effect, Roman education in the sixth century had become encyclopedic in nature and content, in the pejorative

> sense of the term. It was to remain so in the West for centuries to come.[104]

Christianity, carrying with it part of its Jewish roots, was seen to become the next powerful educational movement. The place of book-learning took on a central role in Christian religious education.

The question, however, is if these described tremendous changes in culture and morality included profoundly changed attitudes toward the learning experience of the child through books, with those children who were being educated through reading. The children who received this type of education may be described as having belonged to different classes within society, the goals of their learning to have changed in overt content, and children to have been given different set texts to read and learn, but reading in childhood is considered as having consisted continuously, of the reading and, primarily, memorization of the same books used by adult-learners beyond the acquisition of basic reading skills: the psalms, prayer-books, Latin grammars, and books of morals and manners were used. Outside formal education in monasteries, adults and children are portrayed as listening to the same stories. Ariés writes:

> the Hellenistic paideia presupposed a difference and a transition between the world of children and that of adults, a transition made by means of an initiation or an education. Medieval civilization failed to perceive this difference and therefore lacked this concept of transition. The great event was therefore the revival, at the beginning of modern times, of an interest in education. This affected a certain number of churchmen, lawyers and scholars, few in number in the fifteenth century, but increasingly numerous and influential in the 16 and 17 centuries.[105]

It was the time and thought of the Renaissance and Humanism, referring back to the work of the Greeks and Romans, and of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation

which is attributed with having prompted the development of 'children's books' and it is to these texts to which I will turn my attention in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: The 'Child' and Hierarchical Systems: 'Looking Through the Eyes of the Child'.

The aims of the Greeks and Romans, as they are described, in using reading and literature are clear with respect to children and other learners: literature previously interpreted and evaluated by adults for adults was also given to children to help to inculcate in them the appropriate ideals and ideas for citizenship. Children principally memorized sections of texts, and studied the same texts repeatedly through different stages of their education. This is said to be even more true of Christian religious education in the Middle Ages, which was much more concentrated on texts as the central means of education. The bulk of critical discussion was aimed at defining the morals, ideals, values or doctrine the texts could or should transfer, within the wider discussions on the structures of the ideal state, both of society and the individual within it, and the education conducive to bringing this into existence. Texts remain seen as sources of great authority and influence. As Alastair Minnis puts it:

> No medieval theorist could have decried the 'intentionalist fallacy' or the 'affective fallacy', since authorial intention and the 'affective' functions of literature were of the first importance in medieval literary theory. To a considerable extent, medieval commentators derived their standards of criticism from the psychological causes of the text ('intentionalism') and from its psychological results (its 'affective' appeal to the reader). This difference of opinion should be recognized by the modern theorist and critic.[1]

Minnis' comment is important not only in describing the medieval critics' attitudes,

but also in pinpointing changes of attitudes and emphasis between different streams of (modern) literary criticism. The 'New Critics" 'affective fallacy', for instance, defined by them as the 'confusion of what a poem is with what it does', is later in turn attacked by Stanley Fish, who argues that the reading process of interpretation itself falls under this 'affective fallacy', and that it is thus not a 'fallacy'[2]. In children's literature criticism these shifts in theoretical perspectives take place in different ways: to a great extent both types of attitude intermingle within this criticism as I will show in detail in later chapters. On the one hand the didactic impulse of adults towards children, when concerned with books and reading, relies on 'intentionalism' and, especially, on the 'affective' appeal to the reader - as Minnis put it. Moral and emotional education through reading assumes and relies on, far-reaching effects on the reader. The educationalist Juan Luis Vives was of the opinion that

> poems contain subjects of extraordinary effectiveness, and they display human passions in a wonderful and vivid manner. This is called energia. There breathes in them a certain great and lofty spirit so that the readers are themselves caught into it, and seem to rise above their own intellect, and even above their own nature.[3]

There are not many clearer articulations of the power ascribed to literature in the intellectual, moral, or emotional education of children.

On the other hand, therefore, the development of a 'children's fiction' demanded, and was part of, a criticism which concerned itself with making claims for the 'literary' qualities of this fiction. And in allying itself with literature it could not completely ignore theoretical developments in adult literary criticism:

children's fiction derives its legitimacy in part from its claims of various relationships to the larger world of 'literature' and 'fiction'. Changes in ideas about children and childhood take place from the sixteenth century onwards which are linked to the simultaneous interconnected development of the ontological concept of 'the child', and the notion that these children could be raised and educated in a better way if the methods used somehow corresponded to, or connected with, this ontology. Yet, with regards to books, there now emerges a paradox: a need, it is said, began to be felt for books which somehow connected to this ontology of 'the child'. But the books must still be of adult judged quality and appropriate content, as argued by the Greek, Roman and Medieval Church theorists of education. Vives formulated the paradox as follows:

> although in teaching art, the most perfect and absolute parts are always to be propounded, yet in teaching, those parts of the art should be presented to the audience, which are most suited to their capacities.[4]

With the Greeks, Romans, and Medieval Church teachers the literary or historical texts judged to articulate and embody the greatest of art were seen to be used to teach learners what was great and good. But in a movement to adapt this moral education to the postulated needs and capacities of 'children' - the 'other' to the 'adult' - how could one teach them with material which was simultaneously selected and created by analogy to these postulated capacities - and thus supposedly 'other' to adult art and thus, to a great extent, unjudgeable by 'adult' standards, - and yet comply with the need, borne from the wish to educate in

certain ways, with certain goals, to judge the material as 'good'? Virginia Haviland tells us that in 1844 Elizabeth Rigby, whom Haviland calls 'an advanced critic', wrote that children's books, should be a 'union of the highest art with the simplest form'.[5] Texts have, in this situation to be 'good' for children and 'good' for adults - a difficult situation when notions of childhood depend on specific differences from adulthood. As M.W. Keatinge tells us[6], Mosellanus, Professor of Greek at Leipzig, wrote about his writing of a Pedology he published in 1517 that

> the importance of my occupation [initially] made me disdain this work, doubtless useful, but humble and almost mean in appearance, and ..., not being used to it, I found it difficult to play the part suitably, since I saw that for this kind of comedy a man must become a child once more.[7]

Mosellanus seems to be saying that the simplicity, for him, of the contents of the Pedology, made it more suitable to be written by a child - in this he assumes that a 'child' would also regard it as simple. Or he is implying that a child should write it because then it would reflect or convey in turn its own level and type of understanding accurately - but to do this the child must somehow have a previous knowledge of the contents of the Pedology. What Mosellanus seems to be struggling with is that he felt he should try and remember how he learned as a child in order to, from his current position as adult, clarify or anticipate difficulties. In other words, he must be his adult and his child self at the same time, to successfully tackle the Pedology according to his own idea. Mosellanus' own formulation is echoed, however, throughout children's book production and criticism: the necessity and possibility of adults becoming children again is

repeatedly touched on, often in terms of 'seeing through the eyes of the child'.

Expressions of needs to thus reinhabit the child - to reclaim it after having created it - are preceded by views of a lengthy process of separation. As Philippe Ariés argued, a modern notion of an ontologically definable childhood seems to have emerged significantly from the sixteenth century onwards. Children's books, and the discussions surrounding children's reading, evolved further alongside, and became an integral part of the creation of this cultural narrative of childhood. The story children's book critics and historians tell about the origins of children's books is that they were intended to amuse children, as opposed to educating them primarily. I have already quoted critics such as John Rowe Townsend, F.J. Harvey Darton, and P.J. Buijnsters, as defining children's fiction by distinguishing it from school texts and primers, or by linking books to a child readership. Central to theories of the origins of children's fiction is this linking of childhood with 'leisure' and 'amusement'. 'Childhood' began, in this sense, as, and by, being the repository for ideas about certain types of freedom. 'Freedom' determined as an absence of civilizing and restrictive forces. An opposition was set up between 'non-children's' books, supposedly given to children earlier in history which were said to be oppressive, dictatorial, and forces of civilization in a negative sense with respect to children, and 'children's books' which were simply claimed not to be forces: a part, as it were, of what Rousseau would call a 'negative education', designed, as Peter Gay comments 'to avoid the mistakes of the past and keep Émile from absorbing the vices of his culture'.[8] In this respect, the development of childhood and the roles attributed to children's fiction operate in a boundary area impinging

on several concepts and aspects of freedom and liberty. John Stuart Mill classically delineates the aspects pertaining to this boundary when he introduces his essay On Liberty:

> The subject of this Essay is not the so-called Liberty of the Will, so unfortunately opposed to the misnamed doctrine of Philosophical Necessity; but Civil or Social Liberty; the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual.[9]

'Childhood' represents a specialised status with regard to both 'Liberty of Will' and 'Civil or Social Liberty'. As Mill writes,

> Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that this doctrine is meant to apply only to human beings in the maturity of their faculties. We are not speaking of children, or of young persons below the age which the law may fix as that of manhood or womanhood. Those who are still in a state to require being taken care of by others, must be protected against their own actions as well as against external injury .... Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end. Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion.[10]

Children's fiction becomes defined as being part of a liberation movement, away from didacticism, artificiality, and moralism. As I have argued earlier, children's fiction can also be interpreted as creating and being part of other types of hierarchical relationship between 'adults' and 'children': adults exercising power over children both in relation to the 'law' and 'social and civil status'. The notion of 'childhood', as we saw Derrida imply earlier, is thus part of a developing

interest, placed as occurring from the Renaissance onwards, in 'nature': the child becomes an expression of that which is 'natural': unfettered, spontaneous, unspoilt, true. It is no wonder that Rousseau's Émile is seen as a seminal work in relation to notions of childhood. George Boas, in his study of the Cult of Childhood refers to Rousseau as having

> initiated the idea that childhood is something inherently different from manhood ... since the child is, so to speak, sui generis [Rousseau says], it must be recognized that he has his own ways of seeing, thinking, feeling, and nothing is more foolish than to attempt a substitution of our ways for his.[11]

I will return to consider Rousseau in greater detail, but for the time being will note that interpretations of his type of linking of the child to the natural are essential to the education-amusement divide which is presented as having generated children's fiction. Desires to escape from tyranny or restrictive social mores in this context created a 'childhood' as being everything which was not that which these 'adults' felt themselves to be.

This emergence of childhood as a 'natural' state, and, alongside this, a growing formulation and approval of the 'natural' involved the development of a way for the natural, and, as part of this, the child, to be. In this sense the very expression used to refer to the 'nature' of something, in the English language, encapsulates this notion of a defining essence. A Dutch author on children's literature, Anne De Vries, writes in his Ph.D. thesis on standards by which Dutch children's fiction has been judged through time, that the division between 'adult' and 'child' occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century, and that

> because of the increased interest in pedagogical theory, people slowly started to pay more attention to the needs of the child, and they started putting more emphasis on the nature of the child. In relation to this, the name of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) is often mentioned in the first instance. He explained his pedagogical ideas in the utopian novel Émile ou de l'éducation (1762) ... The Dutch pedagogical theorists of the Enlightenment were, however, influenced primarily by John Locke's (1632-1704) ideas. He regarded the child as a 'tabula rasa': not nature but nurture determines how a person comes to be formed, according to Locke.[12]*

(It may be useful to point out at this early point that Locke's 'tabula rasa' idea is subject to disputed interpretation. John and Jean Yolton, editors of Locke's educational works, warn:

> There is a clear genetic strain in his [Locke's] account of the human understanding. Quick was easily put off by the tabula rasa metaphor (as others have been too), taking that as evidence that Locke had no idea of an organism growing and developing ... this [is an] obviously false remark ... The tabula rasa doctrine was of course about ideas and propositions, not about faculties, capacities, or tempers.[13]

More on this later.)This 'existence' of childhood, this presence in and of itself, can be seen in the works of writers on education previous to Rousseau and the (in children's literature studies) equally quoted John Locke. As De Vries notes, a closer consideration of methods of education prompted speculation about the demands of the person to be educated. 'Education', 'freedom', 'nature', and 'the individual' are closely linked concepts related

* My translation.

to this period of historical development, and 'the child' is moulded by aspects of each of those redefined concepts. This is reflected in the writings of sixteenth and seventeenth theorists such as Rabelais, Vives, Erasmus, Montaigne, Luther, and Comenius. In these authors we find theories relevant not only to the cognitive and emotional processes involved in children and education, and children and reading, but, perhaps still more importantly, we find formulations of the motives and pressures, articulated in their ideals of society, religion, morals, and values, which resulted also in the 'child'. Whereas the Greeks, Romans, and Medieval Church educators, seemed to concentrate on defining the desired results of their endeavors, there followed a slow shift to a simultaneous consideration of the material which had to change to fulfil the preset goals. As Rousseau wrote in Émile:

> The wisest writers devote themselves to what a man ought to know, without asking what a child is capable of learning. They are always looking for the man in the child, without considering what he is before he becomes a man.[14]

Which changes were required, and how were they to be achieved? This question becomes pertinent to the definition required for the child.

M.W. Keating touches on a number of the elements engaged in the discussions on education and children when he writes, in the introduction to Comenius' The Great Didactic:

> The day school open to children of every rank; the large class managed by a single teacher as the only means by which such schools were economically possible; the introduction of every

> subject of instruction that could free the understanding from sophistic habits and teach men to look facts squarely in the face - these were the goals towards which his [Comenius'] efforts strove, and his historical antecedents are bound up with the great democratic movement of which the Reformation was the most striking manifestation, with the names of Luther, Sturm, Calvin, and Knox. The conscience had been installed by the Reformers as guide, and its counsellor, the understanding, needed education. Good schools, and nothing else, could remove monkish ignorance from the land; and this truth Luther was not slow to enunciate.[15]

Reading can be said to take up several roles within the different strands of 'the great democratic movement'. On the one hand nature, and observation and experience of the natural world and life in practice are described as a moral force in their own right. The natural was good and true - a prelude to the pastoral and Romanticism, as well as the Enlightenment philosophers. On the other hand reading is prescribed as the ideal medium of mass teaching. The greater availability of books through the invention of the printing press allowed for reading to be written of as an activity directed towards the acculturation of individuality: instead of being read aloud to, and repeating sections of text preinterpreted by teachers, pupils could have the texts more easily available to themselves, and open to more lengthy and detailed perusal. Thus 'truth' and the values and morality of society are advocated as available through the individual's own perception of nature and books. Individuality and freedom, as ideals, must be taught in form as well as content of teaching: a complex and self-contradictory concept.

The ideas of the child and childhood are used by these writers as a central means of dealing with the inherent paradox of teaching individuality and freedom.

On the one hand, therefore, man, as child, is described in terms of unreason and freedom, on the other hand man as adult in terms of reason and freedom. A shift from an uncontrolled undifferentiated freedom to reasoned specific freedoms characterises the development postulated for the human being from 'child' to 'adult', and sanctions the education crucial to this process. This is how education and why education can be allied to 'amusement': this is an attempt to make it both an efficacious and 'natural' process - a non-forced process. In other words a true liberal arts education. Children's fiction is presented as being the product of these ideas. Vives, for instance, writes that

> the human mind is wonderfully inclined to freedom. It allows itself to be set to work, but it will not suffer itself to be compelled. We may easily gain much by asking, but very little by extortion, and that little with difficulty.[16]

This develops Plato's type of mention of the greater efficiency of non-forced education. Vives also presents education through reading in terms of a natural, pleasurable, process:

> certain instruments, so to say, also were sought for, with which we should be more easily and pleasantly led to the paths of reason ... Music, as a relaxation and recreation of the mind, through the harmony of sounds. Under this head, comes all poetry, which consists in the harmony of numbers. Prose oratory, however, has its rhythms, though they are not fixed by definite and constant law, like poetry.[17]

The Greek concept of harmony and balance is one of the components of the traits of renaissance and Humanist 'nature'. Vives specifies the role of books:

> to books we must refer for knowledge in every subject. For without them, who could hope that he would attain the knowledge of the greater things? The direct inspiration of God teaches only very few ... Therefore the man desirous of wisdom must make use of books, or of those men who take the place of books, viz. teachers.[18]

Montaigne equally clearly reflects this reinterpretation of education. He emphasises that 'I wholly condemn all violence in the education of a tender mind, which one intends to bring up to honour and liberty'.[18] This statement beautifully encapsulates the paradox these thinkers are working within. Montaigne, like Vives, asserts

> one can only tempt the appetite and affections; otherwise one only educates book-laden asses: by blows from rods one gives them a pocket full of knowledge to keep safe. Whereas if we would succeed, one must not only lodge it in their minds but espouse and wed them to it.[20]

To raise children 'to honour and liberty': Montaigne has, as Vives did, reformulated Greek thought with new pertinence to the views of these Reformation and Humanist writers on education and society. Love of learning, they argue, must be engendered, henceforth, as a basis, and part of, freedom and choice.

Though concerned with issues of freedom - both redefining the term and relating it to education - Vives and Montaigne seem primarily concerned, as Rabelais and Erasmus seem to be, with the education of the 'young gentleman'. As Keatinge pointed out, Comenius, and Luther before him, were, in some respects, advocates of different kinds of freedom than those Humanists and,

hence, addressed educational issues from a different angle. Whereas Vives, Montaigne, Rabelais, and Erasmus and, later, Locke and Rousseau could be said to centre their educational theories - implicitly or explicitly - on liberty of Will in children of ruling social classes, Luther and Comenius, as a consequence of their religious views, addressed social and civil liberty and its relationship to education. Both Luther and Comenius advocate mass education, motivated by religious zeal. Luther's views on education and freedom are important elements of his Reformation doctrines. Vives and Montaigne illustrate concerns with linking education to a voluntary process of enjoyment of learning, a core element of notions around children's fiction, but Luther and Comenius propagate reading and general literacy as the method of mass religious and moral education: another idea which persists powerfully in discussions on children's fiction.

Comenius refers back to Luther when he writes, in The Great Didactic,

> Dr. Luther, in his exhortation to towns of the empire on behalf of the erection of schools (A.D. 1525), asks for these two things among others. Firstly, that schools may be founded in all cities, towns, and villages, for the instruction of all the young of both sexes ..., so that even peasants and artisans may, for two hours daily, receive instruction in useful knowledge, in morality, and in religion. Secondly, that an easier method of instruction may be introduced, so that students, instead of developing antipathy towards learning, may be enticed by irresistible attractions, and that, as he says, boys may gain no less pleasure from study than from spending whole days in playing ball and amusing themselves. These are the views of Dr. Luther.[21]

Comenius' and Luther's interest in moral education on a large scale involves a close consideration of the nature of interpretation. The Medieval Catholic Church

is presented as having kept religious texts firmly to itself, for fear of dissent and divergent interpretation of the holy texts. To advocate literacy on a mass scale as necessary to open study of religious texts, as Tyndale, Luther, and Comenius do, and yet have extremely clear views on the right and wrong of religious ideas indicates particular ideas of readers and reading. .Whereas the overwhelming emphasis in children's literature discussions seems to rely on views of reading as amusement, and hence refers to these ideas as they developed in Vives, Montaigne, Locke, and Rousseau, I would argue, in fact, that Comenius' and Luther's discussions on the tension between individual readership but controlled interpretation are equally absolutely crucial to the common use of the concepts of 'childhood' which differentiate children's literature criticism from some current adult literary criticism. Whereas, namely, adult literary theory currently, in its various forms, seems to be concerned with the possibilities of individuality of interpretation of texts, and the relationship of these interpretations to a common critical discussion, much children's book criticism relies on the concepts of childhood to unify and control interpretation: this is one aspect of the manifestation of the adult-child hierarchy with respect to children's reading. 'Looking through the eyes of the child' is, as I have suggested, in this sense, not only a metaphor to be interpreted as an expression of concern and understanding, but also of invasion, domination, and control: 'Looking through the eye of the child', also implies looking through the 'I' of the child.

Luther and Comenius, as I have read them, are concerned with mass moral education, and Vives, Montaigne, and Erasmus with the education of the 'young

gentleman', as it had been described for centuries, in some form, from the Greeks onward. In fact, Luther and Erasmus wrangled over the issue of religious mass-education in an exchange of writings concerned with the possibility of free will.[22] Obviously these discussions were of great importance to a religious context, whereas general writings on a gentleman's education were concerned with a mixture of liberal arts and religious education for religious and civil purposes. Luther, and Erasmus in the discussion with Luther, are only discussing the teaching of Scripture, not Classical texts (though Luther mentions some texts of classical origin with a view to banning them). Luther's writings are pertinent to the terms of later children's literature criticism in three respects: his advocacy of mass literacy for the purpose of religious education; his controlling of the 'freedom' this general literacy introduced; and his discussion of the Father-child relationship between God and the Christians, which parallels some of the aspects of the redeveloping hierarchy between earthly adults and children. (Again: with respect to the two latter issues I am not so much concerned with any 'actual' historical influence of Luther's ideas as with the fact that they seem to me explicitly illustrative of the constructions of ideas usually taken for granted in children's literature criticism).

Firstly, then, Luther, in his rebellion against the corruption of the Papacy and the Medieval Catholic Church, strongly advocates a return to the word of God - of the Bible - as a source of authority, rather than the interpretations of the Pope. In his 'Address to the Nobility', one of the key documents of the Reformation, Luther writes:

> it is a wickedly devised fable, and they cannot quote a single letter to confirm it, that it is for the Pope alone to interpret the Scriptures or to confirm the interpretation of them: they have assumed the authority of their own selves. And though they say, that this authority was given to St. Peter when the keys were given to him, it is plain enough that the keys were not given to St. Peter alone, but to the whole community.[23]

This idea is a part of Luther's general ideas of the liberty of Christianity. He argues Christians are equal and all free to learn the word of God themselves:

> above all, in schools of all kinds the chief and most common lesson should be the Scriptures and for young boys the Gospel ... should not every Christian be expected by his ninth or tenth year to know all the holy Gospels, containing as they do his very name and life?[24]

To Luther, the Gospel and Scriptures will self-evidently reveal the word of God as he himself sees it. He is dismissive of hermeneutical questions. Having attacked the Papacy for this misuse of the monopoly of interpretation, he seems to rely on the righteous Christian not to fall into the same error - and it is the role of the like-minded members of the community to provide correction. Luther writes sarcastically of a Leipzig professor's discussion of the sixth chapter of St. John, concerned with transubstantiation, that

> this professor of the Bible must be permitted to prove whatever he pleases out of any passage of Scripture he pleases. For he is an Anaxagorean, nay, Aristotelian theologian, to whom names and words when transposed mean the same things and everything. Throughout his whole book he so fits together the testimonies of Scripture ... I pass over the rest, that I may not quite kill you with the dregs of this most offensive drain.[25]

Luther advocates

> that no violence ought to be done to the words of God, neither by man, nor by angel, but that, as far as possible, they ought to be kept to their simplest meaning, and not to be taken, unless the circumstances manifestly compel us to do so, out of their grammatical and proper signification, that we may not give our adversaries any opportunity of evading the teaching of the whole scriptures.[26]

Thus Luther is committed, through his rebellion to what he regards as previous misinterpretation, to a self-evidence of meaning of the Gospel when studied by all.

In the discussion between Erasmus and Luther, Erasmus questions this notion, and Luther defends his views. Erasmus addresses the problems of interpretation:

> I confess that it is right that the sole authority of Holy Scripture should outweigh all the votes of all men. But the authority of the Scripture is not here in dispute ... Our battle is about the meaning of Scripture ... if it [Scripture] is so clear, why have so many outstanding men in so many centuries been blind, and in a matter of such importance?[27]

Interpretation is the crucial point in Erasmus' and Luther's dispute, as Erasmus supports free will, and Luther denies it, both claiming their views on the basis of Scripture. Erasmus' argument that obscurity in Scripture has led to centuries of discussion, leads to his view that these problems should not be aired generally:

> such matters might allowably have been treated in discussion by the learned world, or even in the theological schools ..., to debate such fables before the gaze of a mixed multitude seems to me to be not merely useless but even pernicious.[28]

To Erasmus Luther's resort to opening up to the public judgement and knowledge of the Scriptures has no basis:

> You [Luther] say, 'what has a mitre to do with the understanding of Holy Scripture?' I [Erasmus] reply, 'What has a sackcloth or a cowl?' You say, 'What has the knowledge of philosophy to do with the knowledge of sacred letters?' I reply, 'What has ignorance?'[29]

Luther defends his views by, again, railing against hermeneutical disputation:

> I am speaking, moreover about the assertion of those things which have been divinely transmitted to us in the sacred writings. Elsewhere we have no need either of Erasmus or any other instructor to teach us that in matters which are doubtful or useless and unnecessary, assertions, disputings, and wranglings are not only foolish but impious.[30]

Luther accepts, and Erasmus refutes, the acceptance of assertions in religion. Luther denies that there are obscure passages in Scripture:

> that in Scripture there are some things abstruse, and everything is not plain - this is an idea put about by the ungodly Sophists ...; but they have never produced, nor can they produce, a single article to prove this mad notion of theirs ... I admit, of course, that there are many texts in the Scriptures that are obscure and abstruse ... but [this is] because of our ignorance of their vocabulary and grammar; but these texts in no way hinder a knowledge of all the subject matter of Scripture.[31]

Finally, Luther blames any remaining obscurity on

> the blindness or indolence of those who will not take the trouble to look at the very clearest truth ... If you speak of the internal clarity, no man perceives one iota of what is in the Scriptures unless he has the Spirit of God ... The Spirit is required for the understanding of

> Scripture, both as a whole and in any part of it. If, on the other hand, you speak of the external clarity, nothing at all is left obscure or ambiguous, but everything there is in the Scriptures has been brought out by the word into the most definite light, and published to all the world.[32]

Erasmus drily replies to this 'that now every Tom, Dick and Harry claims credence who testifies that he has the spirit of the gospel'.[33]

The focus of Luther and Erasmus' discussion is relevant to children's fiction criticism in several senses. *Their differences of opinion involve acknowledgements* and repression of aspects of need and purpose. Luther and Erasmus are both operating under the aegis of their absolute God and attempt to resolve the clashes between their versions of necessary truths and the liberty to express those truths, and their varying views on the need for their truths to become other persons' truths. Their God both carries the responsibility for acknowledgement and repression of purpose: accepting God as an absolute truth makes it possible to both validate their motivation to have this truth accepted and known, but also implies the eternity and eventual emergence of that truth. Luther and Erasmus' discussion reflects the opposition between claims for the possibility of discovering uniform truth through knowledge (Luther's mass literacy and moral education), and the ideas of pluriform interpretation and individual meaning with the liberty of pluriform interpretation becoming part of truth and righteousness under the limiting safety of the truth of God. René Wellek writes that

> with Erasmus 'the art of criticism' ('ars critica') is applied to the Bible as a tool in the service of an ideal of toleration. Among the later humanists the terms 'critic' and 'criticism' seem, however,

limited specifically to the editing and correction of ancient texts.[34]

In Erasmus this ideal of toleration is limited and determined by the truth of God. This combining of tolerance and truth (which may be the compromise of 'liberal-humanism') occurs in the same way in much children's literature criticism: the critics express tolerance towards, or advocate, plurality of interpretation and use of texts, but the 'truth' of 'the child' limits and determines the scope and use of this interpretation for the critic.

Luther's view may also be said to reflect relationships between children's fiction critics and their child readers, for his notion of the 'Spirit of God' in people controlling meaning, and validating his purpose in directing meaning, is close to the role the concept of 'child' plays in controlling the meaning critics assign to texts for children for children. Even as Luther releases the Scriptures to public scrutiny, the correct Spirit will limit and control meaning for his purposes:

> Let miserable men, therefore, stop imputing with blasphemous perversity the darkness and obscurity of their own hearts to the wholly clear Scriptures of God ... All men have a darkened heart, so that even if they can recite everything in Scripture, and know how to quote it, yet they apprehend and truly understand nothing of it [without the Spirit of God].[35]

Luther corresponds to the role of the children's fiction critic who denies and represses his hierarchical role, retreating behind the 'amusement' value of children's fiction to the 'children' and their freedom from overt coercion in reading and interpretation. Luther, too, ostensibly rejects overt coercion or

pressure:

> I say then, neither Pope, nor Bishop, nor any man whatever has the right of making one syllable binding on a Christian man, unless it is done with his own consent. Whatever is done otherwise is done in a spirit of tyranny; ... no man is bound to receive the traditions of the pontiff, or to listen to him, except when he teaches the gospel and Christ; and he himself ought to teach nothing but the freest faith.[36]

The concept of the 'Spirit of God' functions as concepts of 'childhood' come to do within children's literature criticism as revealing to the adult critic, and putting within the sphere of the adult's vision, understanding, and control, the interpretation and meaning of texts for the child.

We can see then how Luther, in his discussion, is able to simultaneously reject the outright manipulation and force he sees as used by the Pope and advocate a new liberty for the Christian, and yet introduce a factor - the Spirit of God - which will offer a basis for limiting, directing, or controlling individual interpretation. The previous situation is described by Luther as an antagonistic confrontation between, and subordination of one of two forces: the external coercion of the pontiff against the internal beliefs and anxieties of the individual. Under Luther's theories, these dual forces become unified and internalised: man will express his own knowledge and belief, and this will be correct if, and when, man has within him the Spirit of God. Thus the liberty of the individual and the important correctness of belief according to Luther's doctrines are reconciled. Control is now based on innate qualities existing in and of themselves, unless they are altogether absent, which then justifies the labelling of undesirable

interpretations as invalid or incorrect.

This type of control needs to assert its rights. As Clifford Geertz points out when considering the cultural construction of 'common sense',

> we [people] are reluctant ... to draw the conclusion that science, ideology, art, religion, or philosophy, or at least the impulses they serve, are not the common property of all mankind ... Religion rests its case on revelation, science on method, ideology on moral passion, ... common sense rests its on the assertion that it is not a case at all, just life in a nutshell. The world is its authority.[37]

These grounds of authority - revelation, method, moral passion, the world, childhood - are, in this sense, expressions of what Nietzsche calls 'the will to power'. Alexander Nehamas writes:

> Nietzsche's view [is] that ... the will to power is manifested in the ability to make one's own view of the world and one's own values the very world and values in which and by which others live ... Both dogmatism and metaphysics are, like everything else according to his [Nietzsche's] view, manifestations of the will to power. [Nietzsche himself writes]: 'we seek a picture of the world in that philosophy in which we feel freest; i.e. in which our most powerful drive feels free to function.[38]

(We might note that of Luther Nietzsche wrote: '...the slandered instincts, too, try to create a right for themselves (e.g. Luther's Reformation: coarsest form of moral mendaciousness under the guise of "evangelical freedom")').[39]

We have considered, then, the terms of Luther's historical influence as one of the members of the 'democratic movement' in education, and the terms of his discussion with Erasmus concerning the regulation of liberation of interpretation. The third term of Luther's ideas which illuminates these aspects of discussions in

children's literature criticism is his particular use of the common description of the relationship between God and man as a father-child relationship. This terminology is one way of attempting to deal with the difficult issues of religious free will and predetermination. Another analogy used with respect to these problems, related in many ways to the father-child image is that of the master and servant. These doctrinal discussions are fundamentally concerned with a problem many children's literature critics have cancelled out in accepting 'amusement' as a liberation force for children, functioning within the parameters of an assumed knowledge of the essence of 'child', namely how freedom functions with respect to the subordinate partner in a hierarchical relationship. How can man be free with an all-knowing, all-controlling God? How can the 'child' be free with an all-knowing all-controlling 'adult'? As I have argued earlier, I am claiming the inevitably of the hierarchy, but I am interested in the terms in which this discussion is conducted, and expresses permission to a dominant narrative of 'adulthood' to formulate 'children' and 'childhood' as terms operative within the 'will to power'.

Religion has struggled with the problem of free-will, in this sense, for centuries. As Erasmus points out: 'From the time of the apostles down to the present day, no writer has yet emerged who has totally taken away the power of freedom of choice, save only Manichaeus and John Wyclif.'[40] The wish to claim the possibility of freedom of choice is indeed powerful, and, for religion, demands a reconciliation with the perfect God. Philip Watson explains Luther's views:

> fallen man ... retains his powers of reason and will ... but both his reasoning and his willing are radically corrupt, being governed from

> the false premises dictated by Satan.... When the will of God runs counter to his own [man's], it seems to him arbitrary and tyrannical, and if he does not simply flout it in blind self-assertion, he complies with it in calculating self-interest, with an eye to escaping punishment or gaining reward. He acts thus of necessity, in as much as he has no 'will of his own' over against the Evil Spirit by which he is inwardly moved; and just for that reason he acts voluntarily, not under coercion against his will. But he does not act freely, that is, with the spontaneity of genuine love; ... Freedom, in the full and proper sense of the term, belongs in Luther's view only to God.[41]

It is, explains Watson, Luther's view that

> it is, however, God's purpose to save man from his evil bondage, and to this end he works by means of his Word and his Spirit ... Where and insofar as this happens, man is restored to his true and natural relationship to God, and thereby enters into the fullest freedom of which he is capable. This is the liberty of the children of God, in which men can freely cooperate with God, not for the achieving of their own salvation, but in the fulfilling of God's purposes in the world with respect both to its spiritual and temporal welfare.[42]

This is also, I would argue, the structure of the liberty of the children of man as described within much of children's literature criticism: through the adult's word and spirit (spirit as in: guiding and developing force and consciousness) children are seen to voluntarily cooperate to enter into their fullest freedom - the achievement not of their own salvation as children, but the fulfilment of the adult's purposes in the world with respect to both its spiritual and temporal welfare. Luther, in his religious conviction, has to formulate man's liberty within the restrictions created by the absolute premise of the existence and perfection of a God, and in doing so provides an analogue of the way the liberties of the constructed subordinate child in relation to the presence of the dominant adult

may be considered. Luther's theorizing on the structure of the relationship between God and man shows how the narrative of the relationship between adult and child, which is, in children's literature criticism, often taken as being the product of the study of the nature of 'child', in fact existed within parallel contexts of power hierarchies, before the invention of this 'child'. Compare to this for instance also Vygotsky's learning theory where the adult is said to lend his consciousness ('zone of proximal development') to the child as a means of learning.[43]

As I noted earlier, Comenius quotes Luther as an authority in discussing the need for mass education. Comenius is a prominent figure not only within the wider field of educational theory, but also specifically in connection with children's books. Comenius' further refinements of educational ideas led him to produce the Janua Linguarum, an introduction to the study of Latin, in 1631. Though similar books had appeared before, Comenius' Janua became highly successful. Keatinge tells us that

> it [the Janua] was translated into twelve European languages ..., and even travelled as far eastward as Asia ... it is an undoubted fact that in every European country generations of children thumbed the Janua and no other book until they were sufficiently advanced to begin Terence or Plautus, and that for years after its publication Comenius' name was familiar in every school-room.[44]

Comenius published a number of other schoolbooks, the most important being, with a view to the development of children's fiction, the Orbis Pictus. This was a shortened and simplified version of the Janua, accompanied by illustrations

matched to the text. Letters, for instance, were presented with pictures of animals whose cries echoed the pronunciation of the letter. Keatinge says that

> the success of this book was even more extraordinary than that of the Janua Linguarum. It went through numberless editions ... the Orbis Pictus was the first picturebook ever written for children, and exercised a softening influence on the harshness with which ..., the first steps in learning were always associated ... 'Apart from the Orbis Pictus of Amos Comenius', wrote Goethe, 'no book of this kind found its way into our hands'.[45]

Comenius thus, for many children's book critics, is one of the sign posts on the way to 'amusement' and the 'liberation' of children from teaching with respect to reading and morality. The connection between children and illustration, by the way, from here on becomes one of the fixed elements of children's fiction and the definition of childhood. The establishment of this connection between children and illustration is an element of attributing to children a separate and special vision and eye / I. Comenius, like Vives, Montaigne, and Luther is concerned with developing a method of education which would wed children's minds to learning: instead of rebellion or resistance there must be engendered a love of learning and a speedy and voluntary adoption of ideals and concepts as the teacher and society wishes to convey them. To devise such a method remains a powerful and coveted tool in spreading one's own beliefs and convictions through a population. Keatinge informs us that Wolfgang Ratke, one of Comenius' immediate predecessors in school reform, made as great a mystery of his method as was possible, and hoped, by judiciously concealing its details and advertising its merits, to sell it for a high price to some prince or noble.[46] Comenius' own aim in writing his Great Didactic

is

> to seek and to find a method of instruction, by which teachers may teach less, but learners may learn more; by which schools may be the scene of less noise, aversion, and useless labour, but of more leisure, enjoyment, and solid progress; and through which the Christian community may have less darkness, perplexity and dissension, but on the other hand more light, orderliness, peace and rest.[47]

Again, the engendering of voluntary learning as necessary to the free man - the linking of 'leisure' and 'enjoyment' with 'solid progress' - requires a postulation of those aspects of 'child' which have to do with what it may like, love, or prefer of itself: its will and desires must be 'known' (in both its senses: 'understood' and, biblically, 'possessed') because these educators have come to feel that, for their purposes, certain wants and desires cannot be instilled in people at will. And, as with Luther, Comenius must construct, for the purpose of mass moral and emotional education, wants and desires which he can claim characterise as large a group of learners, 'children', as possible.

Comenius describes his methods and aims very clearly, and in so doing further explicates many of the ground rules assumed not only by later theorists and philosophers of education, but also by the discussions on children's books. Comenius, for instance, criticizes previous educational thinkers for having almost all proceeded by means of unconnected precepts, gleaned from a superficial experience, that is to say, a posteriori.[48] Comenius ventures to promise that he, on the other hand, will produce

> a Great Didactic, that is to say, the whole art of teaching all things to all men, and indeed of teaching them with certainty, so that the result cannot fail to follow; further, of teaching them pleasantly, that is to say, without annoyance or aversion on the part of teacher or pupil, but rather with the greatest enjoyment for both; further of teaching them thoroughly, not superficially and showily, but in such a manner as to lead to true knowledge, to gentle morals, and to the deepest piety. Lastly, we wish to prove all this a priori, that is to say, from the unalterable nature of the matter itself ... that we may lay the foundations of the universal art of founding universal schools.[49]

Comenius illustrates how 'amusement' starts it career as a form of claimed love and commitment to learning. Enjoyment is part of teaching thoroughly, for 'true knowledge', 'gentle morals' and 'deepest piety'. To prove his method will be able to teach 'all things to all men' Comenius turns to basing his theories on a priori logic, on 'the unalterable nature of the matter itself'. The 'unalterable nature of the child itself' is part of this thinking. We return to the connection between 'child' and 'nature': knowing the a priori traits of childhood will provide one of the bases from which to reason how to proceed further. A belief in the universal traits of 'child', in a 'nature of childhood', provides the necessary background for believing in the possibility of devising a method for teaching 'all things to all men'. Education to Comenius is Utopian: 'the salvation of the human race is at stake', he writes, and asks:

> What better or what greater service could we perform for the state than to instruct and to educate the young? Especially at the present time and in the present condition of morals, when they have sunk so low.[50]

It is the cry, as we have seen, of educators up till the present day.

Chapter Four: The 'Child' and Forms of Liberty: the Education-Amusement Divide.

As I have argued throughout, children's book criticism may be said to have been formed not, as its commonly assumed, primarily by a legacy of ideas about the ostensible possibility of liberating children from what comes to be perceived as the oppression of adults, but by a legacy of intense concern with moral and emotional education. Both education for freedom and education for and through enjoyment are subordinate elements of a moral and emotional education and are not, as we will see is often asserted, independent goals in their own right, a liberation from moral and emotional teaching. Comenius illustrates this clearly. As he says himself:

> should there be any man who is such a pedant as to think that the reform of schools has nothing to do with the vocation of a theologian, let him know that I was myself thoroughly penetrated with this idea. But I have found that the only way in which I can be freed from it is to follow God's call, and without digression to devote myself to that work to which the divine impulse directs me.[1]

To Comenius children are characterized precisely by their susceptibility to education. He traces this trait, and its importance, to the Bible:

> 'Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' (Matthew XVIII, 3)... Just consider, we elders, who consider that we alone are wise, and that you lack sense, that we are eloquent, but you speechless - we, I say, are sent to learn our lessons from you! You are set over us as masters, you are to be our models and examples. If any one should wish to deliberate why God prizes children so

> highly, he will find no weightier reason than this, that children are simpler and more susceptible to the remedy which the mercy of God grants to the lamentable condition of man. For this reason it is that Christ commands us elders to become as little children ... to return to our former condition of simplicity, gentleness, modesty, purity, and obedience.[2]

At the same time, however, Comenius asserts the impossibility of adults becoming children again in this way: 'nothing is harder than to lay aside our habits, ... there is no more difficult task than for a badly-trained man to return to his former state'[3], and concludes that, therefore, 'if the corruption of the human race is to be remedied, this must be done by means of the careful education of the young.'[4] Many of Comenius' ideas derive from theological themes concerning states of innocence and sin, redemption and damnation, many of which are traditional throughout Christian religious writing. We can see how Comenius' ideas about education and childhood are related to his theology (he was a devout member of the Moravian Brethren), as with Luther, but that these ideas become redefined within the context of increased pressures to develop education and literacy, and become absorbed into the structures through which people increasingly tried to observe and define 'childhood' as not a theological, but a 'scientific', 'self-evident', or 'natural' 'reality'.

Childhood as a theological state of innocence, to Comenius, combined with the liberation of access to Scripture to limit access to texts in general. Increased literacy, as originally advocated by theologians such as Luther and Comenius as a means of Reformation, can come under pressure increasingly of forces advocating, in their turn, restrictions on access and interpretation. We saw how

this development was already present in Luther's own arguments. When 'children' are regarded as 'by nature' susceptible and open to moulding, if the right methods be found, it can become of increasing importance to regulate their reading. Whereas previously, in writings on education, the reading material of learners was recommended to be selected and restricted in line with general ideas concerning blasphemy and corruption - applicable to both adults and children, if at all - there emerges in these authors the beginnings of an idea about increased literacy for adults as a fundamental element of 'free' reading while increased literacy for children is directed for them to an ever more limited and specific body of reading matter. Whereas, with regard to reading and the democratic idea of forming one's own judgements and opinions in individual communion with a written text, previously most unlettered adults are represented as children under the learned clerics' or aristocracies' direction and guidance, there is now a shift of this distinction from socio-economic class to age. Philippe Ariés remarks on this parallel between class and age:

> thus the old stories which everyone listened to in the time of Colbert and Mme. de Sévigné were gradually abandoned, first by the nobility and then by the bourgeoisie, to the children and country-dwellers. The latter in their turn abandoned them when the newspaper took the place of the Bibliotheque Bleue; the children then became their last public, but not for long, for children's reading is at present undergoing the same evolution as games and manners ... It is important to note that the old community of games was destroyed at one and the same time between children and adults, between lower class and middle class. This coincidence enables us to glimpse already a connection between the idea of childhood and the idea of class.[5]

Ariés also remarks on a move, at the end of the sixteenth century, to remove indecent books from the education of children. He suggests that

> this was a very important stage, which may be regarded as marking the beginning of respect for childhood. This attitude was to be found among both Catholics and Protestants, in France and England. Until then nobody had hesitated to give children Terence to read, for he was a classic ... They reveal a new decorum, a desire to avoid any word or expression which might be considered offensive or indecent.[6]

Ariés makes this comment with a view to contrasting medieval and (post-) renaissance attitudes to what we now regard as 'children'. His remark, however, covers two shifts: firstly a shift in moral views, and then, secondly, the connection of this morality to 'childhood' in a specific way. 'Childhood' is formed by this allocation of 'suitable' reading, behaviour, and attitudes, according to age.

Increased literacy, in Luther and Comenius' discussions, creates a paradoxical situation in this respect: it is a freedom permitted by these theorists with a specific view in mind, to be limited when it threatens to subvert or engulf their aims. The centre of control of this freedom is placed alternately with whoever, in a given position, is seen as holding the moral or ideological higher ground. He who can deal with knowledge and yet not be corrupted by it, may teach those who would be corrupted by this selfsame knowledge (this is, ultimately, a God). Or he is seen as inevitably corrupted, but retaining the ability of transferring a knowledge without the corruption. It is this paradox of authority and teaching which, I have suggested, causes Jacques Derrida to disown writing while writing, or, according to Alexander Nehamas' interpretation, Nietzsche's use

of ever changing styles in his philosophical writing. They are attempting to both acknowledge and, simultaneously, disrupt the authority of themselves as writers and thinkers who are thinking about truth (even as non-truth), and who are, nevertheless, moved to share their views, to express their will to power. Nehamas writes 'Nietzsche's effort to create an artwork out of himself, a literary character who is a philosopher, is then also his effort to offer a positive view without falling back into the dogmatic tradition he so distrusted and from which he may never have been sure he escaped.'[7] In Beyond Good and Evil Nietzsche asks 'what in us really wants "truth"? ... why not rather untruth? and uncertainty? even ignorance?'[8] As Nehamas points out: 'Yet to ask even these questions is inevitably an effort to get matters right concerning them, and they are therefore themselves motivated by the very will to truth they call into question.'[9]

Nietzsche's suggested approach to the issues raised around this will to truth, Nehamas suggests, occur in Beyond Good and Evil, when Nietzsche argues:

> From the beginning we have contrived to retain our ignorance ... in order to enjoy life! And only on this solid, granite foundation of ignorance could knowledge rise so far - the will to knowledge on the foundation of a far more powerful will: the will to ignorance, to the uncertain, to the untrue! Not as its opposite, but - as its refinement![10]

The central purpose of Beyond Good and Evil, Nehamas argues, is to reject 'the fundamental faith of the metaphysicians ... the faith in the opposition of values.'[11] Childhood is a category which is both one of the products of, and also a concept sustaining, these issues. The anxiety of ignorance manifests itself in its control by

the will to truth, by allocating ignorance to 'safe' places of 'truth' and 'reality'. 'Childhood' constitutes such a 'safe' place: limited, controlled, and temporary. Again, when Nehamas argues that 'Nietzsche writes that truth is created and not discovered ..., but he still believes that we must think of it as something we discover in order to go on to create it'[12], the temporal aspect within the notions of 'discovery' and 'creation' are reflected in the temporality of childhood and its resolution in adulthood. The concept of a will to truth as a refinement of the will to ignorance are reflected in the paradoxical views of corrupted adulthood retaining the knowledge of innocence - knowledge including the knowledge of un-knowledge-, and childhood as un-knowledge in itself - un-knowledge with no knowledge of un-knowledge. Ariés writes in these terms when he suggests that, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a 'different and older concept' of childhood reigned, in which 'ideas of innocence and reason were not opposed to one another'. He argues that 'the association of childhood with primitivism and irrationalism or prelogicism .. belongs to twentieth century history'.[13] This twentieth-century position of childhood is open to both respect and protection, as being a state of innocence before the fall, of unselfconsciousness before selfconsciousness, as the ignorance supplying the truth with tolerance, and (it is also open) to ridicule, contempt, control, and dismissal, depending on the aims and needs of the self-proclaimed knowledgeable.

The morality which Ariés defines, developing into a protection from sexuality as part of what was considered 'offensive and indecent', is an element of 'adult' paradoxical knowledge. Sexuality, in its Judeo-Christian tradition, is part of

knowledge, and an aspect of the problematic nature of knowledge: adults dealing with the full load of ambiguous traditions regarding knowledge and sexuality can redeem themselves, or attempt to, by, as Comenius pointed out, protecting the next generation from this corruption, and defining their original nature by their freedom from these corruptions. The unresolvable ideal, within this framework, is knowledge without corruption for this new generation: 'adults' as 'children' and 'children' as 'adults'. The ideal's paradox can never be resolved because it dismisses, within it terms, the possibility of thinking of 'children' as part of an equally constructed, but hierarchically dominant, 'adulthood' which formulates 'childhood', and its needs and uses, by, and of, itself. 'Adult' and 'child' define each other by separation, and by comparison across the space between them as 'empty' categories, and cannot achieve a resolution of this separation because of its complicity, and involvement, with all the other ideas which accrue around, and define by off-setting, the 'empty' categories of 'adult' and 'child': knowledge and ignorance, sin and innocence, reason and madness, order and chaos, freedom and limitation or subjection.

Ariés' interest in a separation of sexuality from childhood, in games and texts from the sixteenth century onwards, involves not only a construction of a childhood used, but also the needs which constructed the childhoods. Jacqueline Rose, we saw earlier, interprets the use of children's fiction as an adults' tool for de seduction and amalgamation of the child to the adult, a subjection of the polymorphous nature of the child's sexuality as Rose sees it to the controls and limitations of adult sexuality. However, children's fiction can be seen not only as

an expression of Rose's adult constriction and regulation of a child for an adults' sake, but also as an expression of a paradoxical wish to resolve the self-imposed and self-defined separations: efforts to remain in touch with, and deal with, the anxieties of ignorance and knowledge, of being and becoming, of presence and absence for their own sake.

'Amusement', then, acquires a functional definition specific to education and, as a part of moral and emotional education, to children's fiction, as being not only a force of liberation and pleasure for children but also a concept applied to 'children' and 'adults' as a means for the adult to satisfy a will or need to have the knowledge and control of the child's desires, will, and consciousness through voluntary, spontaneous surrender: the child coming within the adult again, but not only in terms of an annihilation or suppression of 'child', as Rose presents it, but also as an effort to amplify, sustain, or fulfil, a living presence of, and as, 'adult'. In so far as children's fiction is discussed in an area created on the 'education' and 'amusement' divide, with its allegiance expressed toward an 'amusement' value, as defined by itself, there has been less attention paid to the camouflage function of this 'amusement': hiding both Rose and my type of moves towards (re-) assimilation of adult and child. Harvey-Darton shows this will towards camouflage when he writes that the first chapters of his Children's Books in England are

> the chronicle of the English people in their capacity as parents, guardians and educators of children; with this reservation, that in these pages the child at leisure is to be considered as their preoccupation, and their care for its routine of intellectual discipline very largely (though not entirely) set aside. It is in their human aspect that I wish to see those who wrote children's books; as kind

> people inspired more by love and happiness than by purpose, though happiness was often enough seen as duty and duty uncompromisingly said to be happiness.[14]

The 'amusement' and 'education' divide, which allows for 'adults' as being 'kind people inspired more by love and happiness than by purpose', chooses to avoid thinking, as I am doing, of purposes which become visible and discussible when thinking of an education-amusement divide as another side of the coin of the specific formulation of amusement as a subsidiary element of the purposeful movement of 'education'. This is why the education philosophers previous to Locke and Rousseau - commonly quoted as fathers of 'the child' and therefore, children's fiction - have formed the basis of this discussion: their interests in the 'natural' and 'a priori' in liberation and liberty, and, in Luther and Comenius, in a form of democracy related to (religious) liberty, develop an emphasis on a voluntary educational process, an engendering of an enduring love of learning and selected knowledge. Education as a guiding and inspiring of spontaneous and innate growth goes together with ideas about 'the child' and reflections on imposing - or not - from an 'alien' position, from an 'outside' and on the possibility of following and allowing a 'natural' growth by knowing it and anticipating it from the 'inside': by looking through the eye /I of this 'child'.

Locke and Rousseau follow in the footsteps of the gentleman's children educators. They focus, again, on not purely 'intellectual' education, but on the education of the whole human as a future citizen and social animal. Their interest focuses not on mass education, as with Luther and Comenius, but on the teaching

of the individual. The different consequences of concentrating either on the ideas of mass education or on one-to-one education have not been much referred to in children's literature criticism. Ideas about 'the child' are quite different according to the needs and interests of the educators: as I pointed out earlier the construction of the 'child' is expressed, partially, in the efforts of educators to work with concepts of a two-way interaction, rather than a one-way imposition. Children's literature criticism repeatedly intermingles assumptions and conclusions from the different methodologies and concepts of 'child', derived from these different emphases on either individual or mass education. This creates one of the sources of continual problems in discussions on children and reading, as we will see.

Comenius, in promising the teaching of all things to all men, proposes a number of teaching methods and ideas which become incorporated into definitions of the 'child', and which reoccur in different forms in Locke and Rousseau's theories of one-to-one education. As Comenius promises that the basis of his ideas are 'a priori' he is already asserting the inevitability of his claims: 'Now that the method of teaching has been reasoned out with unerring accuracy, it will, with the assistance of God, be impossible that the desired result should not follow'[15], Johannes Andreae writes in his introductory letter to Comenius' Great Didactic, adding, as an impressively admonitory and crucial footnote: 'It is inglorious to despair of progress, and wrong to despise the counsel of others.'[16] As with Luther, Comenius' theological convictions are echoed in his educational ideas: the God-the-father and man-the-child set a precedent for his views on man-as-father and

'the child', besides the transference of ideas directly as the material which is actually taught. Again, the paradoxical relationship between adult and child as 'others' to each other, but articulated and devised by 'adults', is established in the theological relationship between God and man. Comenius contrasts the Greek saying 'know thyself', and the importance attached to this saying by them, to what he regards as the greater truth:

> For what is the voice from heaven that resounds in the Scriptures but 'Know thyself, O man, and know me.' Me the source of eternity, of wisdom and of grace; Thyself, My creation, My likeness, My delight.[17]

Comenius' vision of man develops the idea of stages of development, and he is one of the earliest to suggest an importance of, and method of, grading. (Though Comenius does not 'grade' strictly according to concepts of age and difficulty of teaching-matter, but primarily according to subjects to be taught at different ages). Grading is a concept crucial to an ever more detailed delineation of specific stages of consciousness and types of ability linked to age. Dividing people into classes on the basis of age is a consequence of the progression of these ideas. Comenius describes the progress of man through life:

> What then is a man in the beginning? Nothing but an informed mass endowed with vitality ... Later on it begins to move and by a natural process bursts forth into the world. Gradually the eyes, ears, and other organs of sense appear. In course of time the internal sense develops ... then the intellect comes into existence by cognising the differences between objects; while, finally, the will assumes the office of a guiding principle by displaying desire for certain objects and aversion for others. But in all these individual points of progress we find nothing but succession.[18]

This is Comenius' description of the development of earthly man at the beginning of life, but Comenius also provides references to many notions attendant on this 'child' and 'adult' from a theological context when he explains his definition of 'nature':

> By the word nature we mean, not the corruption which has laid hold of all men since the Fall (on which account we are naturally called the children of wrath, unable of ourselves to have any good thoughts), but our first and original conditions, to which, as to a starting-point, we must be recalled. It was in this sense that Ludovicus Vives said 'What else is a Christian but a man restored to his own nature, and, as it were, brought back to the starting-point from which the devil has thrown him?... In this sense, too, must we take the words of Seneca ... 'Man is not good but becomes so, as, mindful of his origin, he strives toward equality with God ....' By the voice of nature we understand the universal providence of God or the influence of Divine Goodness which never ceases to work all in all things; that is to say, which continually develops each creature for the end to which it has been destined.[19]

Comenius posits two possible understandings of 'nature': the state of corruption after the Fall, or the previous state of original good and innocence. These two concepts of 'nature' relate to different 'children': as corrupted, man is the 'child of wrath', determined by its parentage, and condemned by it, but there is a 'childhood' which was the 'starting-point' before the Fall - caused by eating the apple from the tree of Knowledge - a 'first and original condition' of innocence and good. A Christian - acknowledging a God the father - can be this child again, a child 'mindful of his origin' striving to become as the Father is. Comenius' theology also provides him with the basis to assume an innate tendency towards learning and development in man. The seeds of learning virtue, and piety,

necessary to going to heaven, are implanted within us, he says.

Comenius also quotes Aristotle's 'tabula rasa' idea, and agrees with it, and, thus, completely anticipates Locke's use of this idea: virtue and aspects of character are innate to man, but ideas and concepts are (or can be) engraved on the 'tabula rasa' mind (As the editors of Locke's educational writings point out, as I quoted earlier, the 'tabula rasa', as used by Locke, is often misinterpreted as pertaining to all of man). As long as an initial willingness to learn is seen as present in man, it can be encouraged and built upon. This idea will become fundamental to educationists such as Froebel and Montessori: their 'child' has an innate curiosity and desire to learn which can be either stifled or encouraged and developed. As Comenius writes:

> the seeds of knowledge, of virtue, and of piety are, as we have seen, naturally implanted in us; but the actual knowledge, virtue, and piety are not so given. These must be acquired by prayer, by education, and by action.[20]

Comenius, having provided the fundamentals of his reasoning from his theology, and having gone on to see in his understanding of 'nature' the expression of divine goodness, goes further by elaborating his theories through drawing, consistently, parallels between education and the growth of plants and crops, and the building of a house. He uses these examples, again, to assert his authority by claiming the self-evidence of his ideas as he shows them to occur in other ares. He finds and constructs examples to support his claims. It is important to note the expression of a need to support claims in this way: by claiming their 'naturalness' -

meaning their inevitability and spontaneous occurrence - Comenius' reasoning from 'a priori' claims is supported. The 'child', too, becomes a part of this type of 'common sense' - as defined by Geertz. This type of reasoning -the constant push to establish the child, and thus education, as a discovered and not an invented 'truth' - thus provides the backbone of many writings on children and reading. Comenius follows this path thoroughly: his principles are stated, the parallels from the natural world, building, or technology are given, and then 'deviations' from these principles are shown in education, with suggestions on how to rectify them. Having thus established the possibility and desirability of mass education, Comenius applies this idea to his concepts of the child. Typically, unsupported assertions on the nature of children find a place amongst the 'buttressed' statements, and this is also true for Comenius' ideas on children's (text)books:

> Care must be taken to suit all these books to the children for whom they are intended; for children like whimsicality and humour, and detest pedantry and severity. Instruction, therefore, should ever be combined with amusement, that they may take pleasure in learning serious things which will be of genuine use to them later on, and that their dispositions may be, as it were, perpetually enticed to develop in the manner desired.[21]

Vives and Montaigne's advocacy of engendering, or developing, a love of learning, are thus equally part of Comenius' mass education. Comenius' further details on which books should be given to children to read are, as we have seen in all the previous theorists, the consequence of his ideals and judgements concerning morality and virtue: as with Luther, (many) 'pagan' books are to be removed from schools. Children must learn from the Scriptures. Teachers who use texts by

Greek or Roman authors are advocating 'a terrible abuse of Christian liberty.'[22] Children, in accordance with their eventual highest destination, must be educated to become 'citizens of heaven.'[23] The Greeks I discussed sought to educate the child into becoming the citizen, partaker of the liberty of democracy, while Comenius and Luther seek to educate the child to become a citizen of heaven, partaker of the liberty of Christianity.

If I turn, finally, to Locke and Rousseau, we may see that they follow these patterns exactly: the 'child' is defined for their purposes, asserted as existing according to inevitable principles, and then principles of intellectual, physical, moral and emotional education are propounded as having been reasoned from a basis of knowledge of 'the child', and developed in order to produce the adult according to their preferred values or ideals. Within much of children's literature criticism little attention has been paid to Locke and Rousseau's wider moral claims and purposes and much more to their ostensible discovery of 'the child' and their specific references to reading for this child. As with the previous theorists, Locke and Rousseau's (reading) 'child' cannot, and, I am arguing, should not be abstracted and isolated from the broader moral views and beliefs of which it is the product. John and Jean Yolton for instance, argue that 'Locke's political work, Two Treatises of Government, contains a move parallel to the child's transition from innocence to knowledge'[24], or from childhood to adulthood:

> the move from pre-civil to civil society. There are in that work two components of this social maturation: [The latter being] from the state of nature or the community of mankind to the civil society. This latter component is especially important for an understanding

> of Locke's views on education. His objective in Two Treatises was in part to explain political power, its nature, jurisdiction, and origin. For an understanding of its origin we must, Locke says, 'consider what state all men are naturally in, and that is, a State of perfect Freedom to order their Actions, and dispose of their Possessions, and Persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the Law of Nature, without asking leave, or depending upon the Will of any other Man.'[25]

The Yoltons relate these political concerns to what they see to be Locke's concerns in education:

> The skill and knowledge needed to order our actions in accordance with the law of nature, to treat our possessions and persons responsibly, and to avoid coming under the absolute control of others (a particularly frightening state for Locke in its threat to personal freedom) are major objectives for education.[26]*

Finally the Yoltons add:

> The particularity of Locke's metaphysics is echoed in his strong emphasis upon individual liberty in his political philosophy, but liberty for him is always correlative with law and order, the law and order of God's laws, of God's will ... The child born into this world has all the equipment and potential to become a member of the community of mankind ... Training for membership is conducted by the family; the rearing of children is guided by that objective.[27]

It can be seen, thus, how Locke's wider understanding of, and strong interest in, human liberty under God may be argued to anticipate and produce his concept of the liberty of child under adult, as with Luther.

Both Locke and Rousseau warn against over- generalizations from their

* My emphasis.

work, and are aware of writing within specific contexts. These statements have been all but ignored by children's literature critics in their interest in assimilating elements of Locke's and Rousseau's ideas on education into their a priori claims of the nature of childhood necessary to their expressed interest in divining an absolute, specific relationship between the child and the book. With respect to children and reading there are within either Locke's writings on education or in The Essay Concerning Human Understanding, or Rousseau's Émile, few grounds for claiming an insight into specific, characteristic traits of children's reading in terms of moral and emotional response, other than their assertions concerning certain characteristics of a 'child' or 'children' as they postulate them for their specific purposes and uses. Locke and Rousseau, within children's fiction criticism, are often referred to, as I have pointed out earlier, in terms of introducing the discovery of the child, and childhood, and in terms of initiating an education-amusement divide for the benefit of the child, and the adult who would eventually develop from that child. I have already quoted De Vries as an example of referral, within writing on children's fiction, to Locke and Rousseau in this way. Other writers and critics echo this primary view of Locke and Rousseau as initiators of recognition for the free and natural 'real child' to whom specific books should and could be given which would amuse and entice the child to knowledge: Donna Norton, for instance, writes that

> in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England [children] were expected to assume adult roles early in life, [so] teaching and books were designed accordingly. Even in behavior, there was little consideration for child development, special educational needs, or

> literature written especially for children's interest. Much of the enlightenment that considered the child as a person has been credited to the philosophy and writings of John Locke ... Locke believed that children who could read should be provided with easy, pleasant books suited to their capacities ... Locke's philosophy did provide the first glimmer of hope that children should go through a period of childhood ... this was a beginning of the realization that they might benefit from books written to encourage their reading.[28]

Rousseau's recommendation of Robinson Crusoe as the only reading matter initially suited to Émile's education is mentioned by Norton and many others.[29]

But, with respect to the child and reading, both Locke and Rousseau's writing may be discussed in terms of developing further a continuing concept of amusement as education. 'Amusement' and 'pleasure', within their writings, achieve a high educational status as exponents of value systems dedicated to varying forms of liberty, social structure, or individuality. It is in examining these ostensible 'discoverers' of childhood as participating in the invention of childhoods that their writings can be incorporated in a consideration of the ways elements of their inventions are used within children's literature critics' systems of discussing what they call 'children's fiction'.

Locke started Some Thoughts Concerning Education in 1684 as an informal letter of advice to a friend, Edward Clarke, on the education of his young son.[30] In the last of what became a regular flow of letters Locke wrote that

> there are a thousand other things that may need consideration, especially if one should take in the various tempers, different inclinations, and in particular defaults that are to be found in children, and prescribe proper remedies to each of them. But in this tumultuary draft I have made for your son, I have considered him barely as white paper, as a piece of wax, to be moulded and

> fashioned, and therefore have only touched those heads which I judged necessary to the breeding of a young gentleman of his condition in general.[31]

Locke's views of what this 'young gentleman' should be are as important to his work in defining the state of the 'pre-young gentleman', and in defining the methods to effect the transformation, as any remarks on inherent attributes of childhood. He concludes the *final version of the published essay:*

> Each man's mind has some peculiarity, as well as his Face, that distinguishes him from all others; and there are possibly scarce two Children, who can be conducted by exactly the same method. Besides that I think a Prince, a Nobleman, and an ordinary Gentleman's Son, should have different ways of Breeding.[32]

James Axtell, in his introduction to his edition of Locke's educational writings, argues Locke's views, though developed for the 'young gentleman', are, in fact, universal rules for raising children. He is able to argue this because he takes certain views on children as definitive and self-evident: in agreeing with Locke's proposals he takes the step Locke avoids, namely of generalizing Locke's ideas to a universal 'childhood', despite noting that Locke advocates 'the wisdom of paying close attention to their different temperaments and rhythms of development, and thereby accommodating the educational program to the child, not the child to the program'[33], and despite acknowledging Locke's statements on different 'Breeding' for different social roles. Axtell has to discount these statements in order to allow for the 'discovery' of the universal child in Locke's work. Axtell's argument for extending Locke's claims to the universal also on the basis of seeing his work in

the Essay Concerning Human Understanding as an attempt to understand the grounds of universal man's understanding, are contradicted in this respect by John and Jean Yolton, in their introductory essay to their edition of Some thoughts Concerning Education. The Yoltons, in contrast to Axtell, write:

> There is one concept fundamental to Locke's general thought which as found in the Essay and in Some Thoughts: the concept of particulars. Locke accepted the principle that 'all that exists is particular'. What this expression meant within his general system was that there are no natural classes ... Locke's commitment to particularity has many forms, including the disavowal of talk of a common human nature shared by all men ... The centrality given by Locke to particulars in his metaphysical system is reflected in his account of persons and his work on education. Each child is to be dealt with individually ...[34]

For the purposes of discussing children's fiction studies the differences of emphasis in Axtell and Yoltons' interpretations of Locke lie in revealing the important consequences for their interpretation of their underlying commitments to, for instance, ideas of 'child' as essential classifying 'truths'.

Axtell also overlooks the implications of his discussion of what made Locke exceptional as a writer on education. He quotes from Locke's The Conduct of the Understanding:

> The business of education ... is therefore to give them this freedom, that I think they should be made to look into all sorts of knowledge ... But I do not propose it as a variety and stock of knowledge, but a variety and freedom of thinking, as an increase of the powers and activity of the mind, not as an enlargement of its possession.[35]

Axtell sees this as Locke's innovation, that,

> the emphasis of education ceased to be placed on brainstuffing and was firmly transferred to the process for the formation of character, of habits - a word always on his tongue - of mind and body.[36]

We find these ideas in the previously discussed educators, notably Montaigne, Erasmus, and Vives, those other 'young gentleman's' educators. Axtell, in this context, refers only to Vives, in a footnote.[37] And, as with those educators, Axtell acknowledges that Locke's interest in educating to 'prepare the child's mental, moral, and physical capabilities to meet any situation'[38], is 'also the hallmark of a liberal education, and we are indebted to Locke for helping to carry that ancient, yet self-renewing tradition across the centuries from its home in classical Greece.'[39] From acknowledging Locke's link to this 'liberal education' Axtell can go on to comment that 'for long periods of time society only vaguely remembers that education means deliberately moulding human character in accordance with an ideal of human nature that changes as the values current within society change.'[40] Having said this Axtell promptly seems not to apply this idea to his own views, but assumes that somewhere beyond the changes of value there was a constant 'child' waiting to be discovered (In other words: educational purposes are seen to be changeable, but the child not). Axtell mentions the renaissance humanist educators as deriving their ideal of human character from early Christianity and the classical period of Greece, and grounding it 'not upon a close or sophisticated analysis of the human understanding ... but ... on a firm common-sense understanding of human nature and the various ways it develops from childhood.'[41] Axtell's 'common-sense' is to be understood in relation to Geertz'

discussion of it, as I mentioned it earlier: it is an assertion of a self-evident truth discovery. To Axtell, Locke has discovered the truth about the child, education, and a universal human nature, 'based on a systematic, empirically sound philosophy of knowledge, ... on an awareness of the gradual evolution of rationality and self-discipline in a growing child'.[42] To Axtell 'history ends' for 'the child' with Locke in this respect: in an evolutionary view of scientific progress towards unchangeable truth Axtell can assign to Locke the discovery of the true child because, Axtell claims, Locke had the 'capacity for the detailed and quiet scrutiny of the whole human understanding, ... [the] belief in the necessity of the task ... Locke secured an insight into human nature that was denied more impatient reformers.'[43] It is Axtell's type of interpretation of Locke's child that operates most powerfully within children's fiction criticism: though there may be varying emphases on 'children as individuals', the critics' definition of these texts as 'children's fiction' marks the limits of the 'individuality' or non-categorization of 'child'.

Axtell's argument therefore indicates how many writers in children's literature studies must, for their own purpose, respond to Locke and also to Rousseau: in attributing to them the origins of ideas about the 'child', and specific reading in relation to it, that they hold to be true, they extend Locke and Rousseau's own claims, and, even while acknowledging a dependence of educational ideals on changing value systems, combine selected claims of knowledge of particular aspects of human development - rational, moral, emotional - into one amalgamated 'child'. These critics are, thus, transferring

historical writings on children's fiction, which refer to Locke and Rousseau's influence on specific writers of what come to be called 'children's books', or on specific educationists - Harvey Darton argues that John Newbery 'was probably acquainted with the actual texts of Locke's Thoughts Concerning Education ... It might also ... be argued plausibly that he admired and was familiar with Rousseau's writing,'[44] and notes that 'in the period immediately after Newbery's death, the works of Rousseau had a very direct effect upon English books for children. Many writers acknowledged their debt to Émile,'[45] - to a system of determinist psychology in which Locke and Rousseau provide the 'truth' about the total child, and thus the development of the idea of a 'correct' education for it, from which children's fiction can extrapolate its 'truth' in relation to 'the child'. These jumps - from the acknowledgement by many post-Lockean and post-Rousseauan writers on childhood, children's fiction and education, of the dependence of concepts of childhood and education on contextual or changeable social values and morals on the one hand (that is to say: there is an acknowledgement of 'history' as formulations of changing of narratives of value and meaning through time), to an almost simultaneous assertion of the use of principles based on a knowledge of a 'real', 'true', 'eternal' 'child', as, it is claimed, introduced by Locke and Rousseau - are encountered repeatedly.

An 'invented' child in Locke fulfils different functions than a discovered Lockean child as portrayed by children's literature critics. Locke, in formulating an image of man without, or before, civilization, and education, postulates a 'non-man', which he refers to in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding as

'Children and Ideots (sic)'[46]*. Locke hence supports his idea of man born without knowledge of innate truths by providing images of non-man determined by an absence of those traits or that knowledge that he wishes to define and discuss. This 'non-man' use is analogous to Foucault's and Derrida's linking of madness and childhood, amongst other concepts, in being determinative of non-supplementarity: instead of functioning as providers of initial presence, Locke's 'Children and Ideots (sic)' constitute an absence of presence (non-innate ideas and concepts) whereby absence and presence determine each other, but are subjected to the need to determine a presence for the sake of the argument Locke wishes to put forward. Removed from the defined and defining presence of Locke's 'human understanding', Locke's 'child' can only lead an independent life as a category-concept, which can be linked to any other writer's postulated arguments and purposes. 'Children's fiction' is based on a denial of 'childhood' as not only an 'empty' category in Locke, and every other writer we have looked at who involved this notion in discussions, but as a space outlined by purpose at every level. This is inevitable in its hierarchical involvement with the 'adulthood' which it helps to determine, and which determines it. To discuss children's fiction as the refinement of a 'non-force' from the force of education - that is, as the eventual 'amusement' split off from the education Locke wanted it to be part of - Locke's child needs to be presented as a presence in and of itself, which would exist, which could 'be', independent of context. Only as a presence as such can it

*My emphasis.

function as the free and unforced (and, within the concept, even individualized) consumer of children's fiction: a child amused for itself, not a child for whom 'amusement' is a force in its own right (inevitable or not).

Locke wrote, then, of the inappropriateness of giving books to children to read which demanded a knowledge of the concepts and facts which, he is arguing, need to be acquired because they are not innate. He also, in his model of a development of human understanding, argues against books for children which would require a fluency of reading skills. Locke seems to have been familiar with Comenius' Janua or Orbis Sensualium Pictus, and hence with the idea of translating ideas about specific states of consciousness, or cognitive and developmental interests, into books. He elaborates on this idea, and advocates the further development of these books. To Locke, as to the other educators discussed, whether primarily interested with the gentleman's liberal arts education, or democratic mass education for literacy, 'amusement' is in the service of the promotion of cognitive and moral education. Thus, 'amusement', as less force, is employed by Locke in reaction to his perception of existing duress and loss of liberty in the teaching and learning situation. Therefore, as with the other educators discussed, it is the attempt to resolve 'education as force' (teaching as limiting liberty) in its clash with liberty and virtue that Locke discusses amusement and education. Locke's amusement cannot be separated from his education, as children's fiction tends to assume. It is necessary to hold them together to allow for the statement, that, ultimately, causes much liberal debate: that 'liberty' is right.

Locke's education and amusement are as constitutive of each other as his 'child and idiot' and 'man': alleviating an oppression of children in education, removing discipline and force, constitutes an education which Locke advocates as being gentle towards the child, and respectful. Locke's concern, in this way, with cognitive and intellectual, and moral and emotional education involves him in the attempt to present an education which benefits from the child he postulates. To children's fiction, however much many critics believe in, and admit their belief in, its capacity to engender knowledge or value in the child, the presence of the child which it claims was uncovered or revealed by Locke and Rousseau helps to limit its fears for its own powers: children's fiction seen as a means for the maximum facilitation of cognitive and intellectual development with minimum use of overt force, or seen as a reflection and expression of a maximum understanding on the part of the adult author and critic of the child as child - of the liberty of child as self-constituted presence - both are views determined by concerns for maintaining narratives of altruistic relations with the non-self.

To Locke 'Vertue ... [is] the first and most necessary of those Endowments, that belong to a Man or a Gentleman.'[47] Children's fiction writers agree, and allocate a role to reading in establishing this 'vertue'. Michele Landsberg writes that

> the books I read as a child transformed me, gave meaning and perspective to my experiences, and helped to mold whatever imaginative, intellectual, or creative strengths I can lay claim to now. No doll or game had that impact on me; no pair of new jeans ever changed my life.[48]

Another kind of 'vertue' is required in relation to children's texts by the Austrian writer Maria Lypp. She regards children's fiction as a form of communication depending on an 'asymmetrical' relationship between adult author and child reader. The adaptations the adult author introduces for the child-reader form, Lypp says, the 'code of children's fiction'.[49] But, she argues, there is an 'ideal of symmetrical communication.'[50] To Lypp 'symmetrical communication' implies 'wahre Verständigung' (true understanding)[51] between author and reader: this concept now becomes a prescriptive criterion for 'good children's fiction'. Maria Lypp wants to see a striving toward 'symmetrical communication' expressed in the children's text to make it 'good' or 'literature'. She argues for the appreciation of 'the child's vision' as something inherently valuable and worth preserving and using. Hence, in Locke, Landsberg, and Lypp, and many other writers on children's literature, their ideals of personal and social 'vertue' operate strongly to determine their arguments concerning the relationships - as they see them - between 'adult' author and 'child' reader. The 'vertue' they advocate may be an exponent of theological, social, political or cultural narratives of value.

Children's fiction, then, operates within the parameters of discussion of the writers on liberal arts education, or moral education as part of this. To educationists such as Locke, Montaigne, Vives, and Luther, moral virtue must be instilled in the child through and through, and yet they attempt to combine this with their strong interests in forms of human liberty. Rousseau discusses this same process, in his terms, in Émile. As with Locke, Rousseau's 'child' (particularised as Émile) is defined in the areas of interaction between concepts of innocence and

sin, knowledge and ignorance, reason and chaos, freedom and nature, and nature and civilization. In Rousseau, even more strongly than in Locke, we see how the 'child' is the product of the paradox of teaching liberty. Peter Gay writes that Rousseau 'like his favorite philosopher, Plato, ... sought to discover and produce the moral man who would make the moral society, and a moral society that would foster the moral man'.[52] And, Gay adds,

> Rousseau often insisted on the critical importance of education. Throughout Émile he scatters hints that education and life and, in particular, education and politics, belong together ... [Rousseau] lays it down that 'we must study society through individuals, and individuals through society: those who want to treat politics and morals separately will never understand anything of either' .... Occasional diversions apart, Rousseau's work stands under the sign of civil education - paideia.[53]

Gay also argues that

> Rousseau was not a totalitarian; he was not even a collectivist. If he was anything, he was, with his fervor for freedom, what his earliest readers called him: an individualist. But, then, none of these names reach the heart of Rousseau, for looking beyond politics Rousseau was above all a moralist, and, as a moralist, an educator.[54]

Rousseau himself said of all his writings, late in life, that within them he saw

> the development of his great principle that nature has made man happy and good but that society depraves him and makes him miserable. Émile in particular, that book that has been so much read, so little understood, and so poorly appreciated, is nothing but a treatise on the original goodness of man.55

Émile, Rousseau stressed, was a theoretical treatise of this original goodness of

man, and is strongly linked to his political ideas as he developed them in his Social Contract.[56] As with Luther, Rousseau's child-adult hierarchy, with the child being allocated a freedom beneath, or within, adult culture and society, is the result of his views of the general possibilities for a liberty within restriction, as commensurate with his ideas in the Social Contract. Rousseau is, in moral and political terms, concerned with resolving the conflicts between his intense interest in freedom, and his concern for a better society. Gay writes that Rousseau's 'solution is modern, and inextricably intertwined with his educational program. The society that makes obedience lawful, and lawful obedience practicable, is a society of Émiles'.[57] Rousseau formulates the problem as follows: 'To find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before.'[58] Rousseau's solution, Gay sums up, 'is the social contract, by which each surrenders all his powers to the general will; but since each is the general will, he has lost nothing essential and rather gained what he needs most: civic freedom'.[59]

It is within the context of the paradox of civil freedom to which Rousseau suggests a solution, that Émile's education is formulated. Émile is in this sense, as with Locke's educational and cognitive studies, not devoted to a simple advocacy, as children's literature criticism would have it, of giving children amusement, or of making their education amusing: both Locke and Rousseau's 'child' is the product of their views on the attributes of 'adults" cognitive processes or moral rights and wrongs of society 'negatived' or 'subtracted', and, as with the humanist

and 'democratic' educators, functions as part of their suggested solutions to resolving the conflict between liberty and the demands of a just society or just God. In Émile Rousseau considers intensely the possibility of liberty for the child. Liberty does not, to Rousseau, mean leaving the child totally to its own devices, just as he does not advocate the return of man to the savage, but argues for this development to a higher civilization in order to become free. Rousseau asks: 'Do you know the surest way to make your child miserable? Let him have everything he wants; for as his wants increase in proportion to the ease with which they are satisfied, you will be compelled, sooner or later, to refuse his demands, and this unlooked-for refusal will hurt him more than the lack of what he wants.'[60] Rousseau realises that the adult-child hierarchy is inevitable within the construction of society: adults cannot withdraw from it even by withdrawing themselves or their rules from the presence of the child; even that constitutes a presence or rule, and sooner or later the child encounters limits (Rousseau's comment in this respect also anticipates the perceived failure, within Western society, of the nineteen-sixties so-called 'anti-authoritarian' methods of raising children). Rousseau asks: 'Do you not see how cruel it is to increase this servitude by obedience to our caprices, by depriving them of such liberty as they have? A liberty which they can scarcely abuse, a liberty the loss of which will do so little good to them or us.'[61] The child's liberty is a specialized liberty, particular to childhood, part of Rousseau's argument for the specialized concept of 'child' as a whole. It is a liberty without power that Rousseau sees for the child:

> So there is only one of the child's desires which should never be complied with, the desire for power. Hence, whenever they ask for anything we must pay special attention to their motive in asking. As far as possible give them everything they ask for, provided it can really give them pleasure; refuse everything they demand from mere caprice or love of power.[62]

Rousseau's reference here to understanding the child's motives points to his invention in Émile, simultaneous to his invention of Émile the child, of the teacher (or 'adult', or himself as teacher) who has an insight, understanding, and anticipation of Émile's thoughts, feelings, motives, will, and development, and, through this far-reaching understanding and insight, a control of those thoughts, feelings, motives, will, and development. A reading of Émile reveals the dominant presence, not of the child Émile, but of the teacher Rousseau. Émile has a child's liberty 'such as they have'; the teacher has the power. To Rousseau, disagreeing with Locke, the child is strongly defined by its lack of reason and judgement, and therefore

> Use force with children and reasoning with men; this is the natural order; the wise man needs no laws. Treat your scholar according to his age. Put him in his place from the first, and keep him in it, so that he no longer tries to leave it. Then before he knows what goodness is, he will be practising its chief lesson ... Let him only know that he is weak and you are strong, that his condition and yours puts him at your mercy.[63]

An education for Rousseau's purposes consists of 'well-regulated liberty.'[64] And, like Locke, Rousseau clearly states that

> there is another point to be considered which confirms the suitability of this method: it is the child's individual bent, which must

> be thoroughly known before we can choose the fittest moral training. Every mind has its own form, in accordance with which it must be controlled ... Oh, wise man, take time to observe nature ...[65]

In line with this, Rousseau wishes that 'some trustworthy person would give us a treatise on the art of child-study. This art is well worth studying, but neither parents nor teachers have mastered its elements.'[66] Rousseau's child is firmly wholly within the hierarchy, even as a free individual, as his adult is a free individual within Rousseau's society. As Rousseau sums up:

> Take the opposite course with your pupil: let him always think he is master while you are really master. There is no subjection so complete as that which preserves the forms of freedom; it is thus that the will itself is taken captive. Is not this poor child, without knowledge, strength, or wisdom, entirely at your mercy? Are you not master of his whole environment so far as its affects him? Cannot you make of him what you please? His work and play, his pleasure and pain, are they not unknown to him, under your control? ... He ought to do nothing but what you want him to do. He should never take a step you have not foreseen, nor utter a word you could not foretell.[67]

Children's literature criticism and production, in almost wholly ignoring this context, and isolating from it loose elements of 'child' and a postulated origin of an 'education-amusement' divide of which children's fiction is supposed to be the product, does not identify any need to examine or resolve the problems of freedom within restriction - the possibility of moral and emotional liberty of response for any actual child-reader (as opposed to all the 'child' readers constructed by adults). It is this ignored issue - drowned by the claims that children's fiction is simply the ultimate liberator of the fantasy and emotional lives

of children, that reoccurs, in various guises, again and again in discussions on children's books. It is these claims of children's literature studies as they stand that we will review in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter Five. The 'Norton' Critics: The 'Child' and the Book.

In the previous chapters I have frequently referred forward to a discussion of the terms of debate within children's literature criticism. Having examined some 'pre-texts' and 'contexts' for, and established the parameters of, the discussions of children, education, and reading, and having called into doubt several ideas I have put forward as being fundamental to children's literature criticism as it stands, in its several guises, I would now like to examine the details of children's literature criticism in its own terms, in the light of the ideas explored in the previous chapters.

As I have repeatedly indicated, children's literature criticism exists by virtue of claimed differences between adults' and children's cognitive, emotional, and moral responses to reading, and the attendant allocation of specific books to adults and children. As a preliminary introduction to the way in which these claims operate within children's literature criticism it may be illuminating to consider an article by an adult literary theorist, Karlheinz Stierle, on 'The Reading of Fictional Texts.'[1] Stierle is interested in examining the relationships, as he sees them, between 'fictional' texts, 'pragmatic referential' texts, illusion, and reality. Stierle reveals his vested interest in literary theory unobtrusively: toward the middle of the article he argues that

> the popular novel, in particular, is a form of fiction that presupposes a quasi-pragmatic reception. Here the act of reading is only a means to an end: illusion building.[2]

Stierle does not approve of this 'illusion building', which he describes also as 'an act of non-reading'.[3] He claims that

> Competent reading of fiction has to pass from quasi-pragmatic reception to higher forms of reception, which alone can do justice to the specific status of fiction. Only if the reader is aware of the great variety of activities entailed in 'reading' does he have a chance to perform the skills demanded by the text, and to approach it with the right attitude.[4]*

To Stierle 'such a reading can only be achieved if the act of reading is accompanied by theoretical reflection'[5], and

> thus literary theory can provide us with new ways of reading which, in turn, could give reading a new place in society ... The communicative function of literature is to be preserved.[6]

This theory will transcend collections of historical and sociological accounts of how specific actual readers read specific texts, for 'the fixed accounts of how a specific literary work has been read are always merely partial accounts whose particularity never entirely reflects the complex experience of reception. They are marked by contemporary concepts, conventions, and prejudices, as well as by the particular interests of the critic.'[7]

Stierle's concern with the problems of accounting for variable responses to texts, his interest in promulgating theories which will encourage a high-level and complex reading of fiction, and his attempts to transcend considerations of

* Emphases are mine.

historical and sociological accounts of individual readers' responses, collapse, however, temporarily, early on in his article, under the weight of a brief discussion of the child as reader. Stierle's somewhat derogatory reference to the 'quasi-pragmatic' reading of 'trivial literature', which leads to 'illusion building', receives one exception:

> the reading of fiction in terms of mimetic illusion is an elementary form of reception that has a relative right of its own. Depending on the vividness of the illusion, the reader may be compelled to identify with fictional roles. Take, for example, the child's experience of the imaginary, which is the purest and least restricted form of this type of reception.[8]

What is regarded as an unsatisfactory, low-level, 'wrong' way of reading for Stierle's 'adult' reader becomes, allocated to a postulated child-reader, 'the purest and least restricted form of this type of reception.'[9] The choice of the positively connotated terms 'purest' and 'least restricted' indicate a temporary approval of such reading - 'naive reading' Stierle also calls it - which must, however, be transcended through maturity.[10] For the child, Stierle further asserts (with remarkably little concordance, by the way, with even contemporary theories of child-development) 'the imaginary world of the fairy tale is real presence, its verbal mediation is skill unperceived. That is why the imaginary, though fixed in language, may have such a powerful impact on the child.'[11] Also, 'the child's pleasure in repetition reveals his desire to gain control over ... preconceptual forms of experience like fear, hope, happiness, unhappiness, wonder, and horror.'[12] Stierle refers, in this context, to Sartre's The Words, which 'strikingly

illustrates how he, as a child, experienced without reservation an imaginary world verbally created and how, at the same time, by experiencing this illusory world, he acquired a consciousness of language and its power to produce illusion.'[13] Finally,

> though the child can still ignore this relationship between illusion and conceptual coherence, its recognition is a prerequisite to aesthetic experience once the referential illusion has seriously been questioned. Only illusion that is sustained by fiction can turn into aesthetic experience that lasts and does not spend itself with illusion.[14]

Stierle's child-reader, so positively identified and characterized, but, in fact, only one of many conflicting versions, is necessary to conceal the intense prescriptive morality of his argument: his child-reader has allocated to it those modes of reading Stierle perceives, and disapproves of, in adults. In the child it is 'pure', in the adult it pertains to 'trivial literature'. The path to developing the correct ways of reading includes the experience, but subsequent discarding of 'naive reading'. Allocated to childhood the type of reading Stierle has constructed as being not the type of reading he believes would function within his view of society, helping to create and sustain his view of society, can be relegated to the realms of both nostalgic reminiscence and temporary primitivism.

In Stierle's criticism the child-reader becomes a safe carrier of aspects of reading Stierle feels he must acknowledge as operating between readers and texts, but wishes to confine and contain. This projection of certain types of reading away from the critic's choice of reading-process may similarly occur on to servants, different social classes, levels of education - or lack of it -, and cultural

background. The rejected reading-process is necessary to parts of the description and definition of the correct or desirable ways of reading. In this way 'illusion building', 'naive reading', and 'quasi-pragmatic' reading, for instance, are simultaneously introduced as ways of reading identified by Stierle, and labelled and marginalised as belonging to 'trivial literature' on 'children'. Stierle's child-reader is characterized by a trait often identified with a child-reader by adult critics and authors of children's literature: a child's claimed ability to submerge into a fantasy world, unaware of textual mediation or the claimed separation between 'fact' and 'fiction', or 'text' and 'reality'. It is a trait which these 'adults', as they are represented in Stierle's article and similarly elsewhere, regard with ambivalence: it is often described as a longed-for capacity, one adults are unable to recapture, and yet often simultaneously derided as 'naive' or as resulting in an undesirable 'illusion'.

Claims that child-readers have an ability to, or can only, submerge themselves in fiction, are part of the larger claims made within children's literature criticism and discussion concerning the supposedly powerful educational and developmental functions of children's literature, which are in turn dependent on a continued separation of 'text' and 'reality'. Masha Rudman, for instance, writes in her book Children's Literature. An Issues Approach, that 'Books are important influences on their reader's minds. They can either help or hinder us when we attempt to construct suitable bases for attitudes and behaviours'[15], and, therefore, books need to 'be analyzed for their effectiveness as well as for their intent'[16]. These claims, echoing the educational theorists I have discussed, from the Greeks

onward, manifested themselves from early on within children's literary criticism. Edward Salmon, in his 1890 article "Should Children Have a Special Literature?', writes:

> [Mr. G.A. Henty's] stories lend themselves especially to the satisfaction of the literary requirements of the multitude. His 'Facing Death' - a story of the coal miners - is as fascinating a work as I know, and would have a clarion effect on the sympathies and the better nature of boys and girls.[17]

Similarly Bernard Lonsdale and Helen Mackintosh argue that they 'are convinced that literature experiences can make a significant contribution to personality development and the enrichment of children's lives'.[18] Donna Norton, in her book, tellingly entitled Through the Eyes of a Child, explains her 'model for evaluating and selecting books based upon literary and artistic characteristics which readers can then use themselves. The importance of child development in this process is also stressed'.[19] I have already quoted Nicholas Tucker's idea that 'children ... sometimes need stimulation in their literature to help them to move away from certain lazy, immature ways of thinking'.[20] Michele Landsberg argues that

> good books can do so much for children. At their best, they expand horizons and instill in children a sense of the wonderful complexity of life ... No other pastime available to children is so conducive to empathy and the enlargement of human sympathies. No other pleasure can so richly furnish a child's mind with the symbols, patterns, depths, and possibilities of civilisation.[21]

I will review Donna Norton's Through the Eyes of a Child in more detail here, as it is a strongly representative example of the methods of child-reader and

child-reading construction of these particular types of critics. These critics, as with James Axtell, in his discussion of Locke, link their invention of the child-reader to ideas of a scientific and empirical 'discovery' of the nature of child. Norton (in the same way as the critics mentioned earlier, and, for instance, Charlotte Huck in Children's Literature in the Elementary School[22], Myra and David Sadker in Now Upon A Time[23], and James Smith and Dorothy Park in Word Music and Word Magic[24], to name just a few examples) explains why she claims that 'literature and literature-related activities nurture child development'[25], based on 'discuss[ing] how appropriate children's literature can promote language development, cognitive development, personality development, and social development'[26], based on

> research in child development [which] has shown that there are recognizable stages in language and social development. Children do not progress through these stages at the same rate, but there is an order through which they mature. The characteristics of children demonstrated during each stage provide clues that can be used in selecting appropriate literature; this literature can benefit them during that stage of development, helping them progress to the next stage.[27]

By then discussing several researches into child language development, cognitive development, and personality development, Norton draws conclusions for the implications for children's reading. If Martin Braine's recordings of preschool children's speech show 'a rapid expansion of speech in a short time'[28], then, Norton, says,

> Literature and literature-related experiences can encourage

> language development in these pre-school children. Book experiences in the home, library, and/or nursery school can help them use language to discover their world, to identify and name actions and objects, to gain more complex speech, and to enjoy the wonder of language .... the add new words to their vocabulary .... picture books help them give meaning to their expanding vocabularies .... [provide] practice in naming common objects .... many excellent books .... allow children to listen to the sounds of language and experiment with these sounds.[29]

For elementary-age children, Norton uses Walter Loban's

> most extensive, longitudinal study of language development in school-age children, examining the language development of the same group of over two-hundred children from the age of five to eighteen. He found that children's power over language increases through successive control over forms of language, including the ability to handle pronouns, verb tenses, and connectors .... Loban identified several major differences between children ranking high in language proficiency and those ranking low .... Loban concluded that greater attention should be given to the development and instruction of oral language. Due to the fact that literature provides both a model for language and stimulation for oral and written activities, it excels in developing language.[30]

And, Norton explains, literature stimulates oral and written activities because 'children can relate to [a literary character's] experience and use it to stimulate their own wild experiences ... Children enjoy using their imagination and turning the common occurrences of their streets into creative experiences.'[31]

With regard to cognitive development, Norton refers to Mussen, Conger, and Kagan, in defining cognition as being the processes involved in

> perception ... memory ... reasoning ... reflection .... and insight .... All these processes are extremely important and are essential for success during both school and adult life. Each is closely related to understanding and enjoying literature: without visual and auditory

> perception, literature could not be read or heard; without memory, there would be no way to see the relationships among literary works and to recognize new relationships as experiences are extended. The cognitive processes can be stimulated by carefully selecting literature ... that can encourage the oral exchanges of ideas and the development of thought processes.[32]

This premise is supported by Norton's mention of research which she says shows that

> early stimulation is also necessary if cognitive development is to occur; it appears to be so important that children who grow up in isolated areas without a variety of experiences may be three to five years behind other children in developing the mental strategies that aid recall.[33]

Norton then discusses 'personality development':

> progressing through the stages of personality development is part of the maturing process; books can play a very important role in this development. Bibliotherapy, an interaction between reader and literature in which the ideas inherent in the reading materials can have a therapeutic effect upon the reader, is frequently suggested as a means of helping children through various times of stress .... books in various areas of childhood adjustment such as hospitalization, loss of a friend, and parents' divorce .... [literature] can be used to help children understand their feelings, identify with characters who experience similar feelings, and gain new insights into how others have coped with those same problems ... It shows children that many of their feelings are also common to other children and that they are both normal and natural ... literature explores the feeling from several viewpoints, giving a fuller picture and providing the basis for naming that emotion ... actions of various characters show options for ways to deal with particular emotions ... it makes clear that one person experiences many emotions, and that these sometimes conflict.[34]

Finally, Norton discusses children's social development, or 'socialization':

> socialization refers to the process by which children acquire behaviour, beliefs, standards and motives valued by their families and their cultural groups. Socialization is said to occur when children learn the ways of their groups so that they can function acceptably within them .... Three processes have been identified as being the most influential for socialization. First ... reward and punishment; ... Second, children acquire many of their responses, behaviours, and beliefs by observing others. They imitate the behaviour ... The third process [is] identification [which] requires emotional ties with the model; children believe they are like these models and their thoughts, feelings, and characteristics become similar to them.[35]

Furthermore Norton writes that

> Piaget suggests that between the ages of eight and eleven considerable changes occur in children's moral development. They start to develop a sense of equality ... become more flexible ... the peer-group begins to influence their conduct .... literature ... can aid in the development of these relationships by encouraging children to become sensitive to the feelings of others .... One of the greatest contributions made by literature and literature-related discussions is the realization that both boys and girls can achieve in a wide range of roles. Books that emphasize non-stereotyped sex roles and achievement are excellent models and stimuli for discussion ... An important part of socialization is to become aware of different views, and literature is an excellent way of accomplishing this.[36]

A close examination of these ideas of Donna Norton's leads me to summarize the implications of her central points for children and their reading as follows: (with reference to theories of language development) 1) Literature helps children to progress from one developmental stage to the next, 2) Literature encourages language development in pre-school children, 3) Literature provides a model for language, and stimulates oral and written activity, because, 4) children can relate to a literary character's experience and enjoy using their imagination;

(with reference to theories of cognitive development) 1) cognitive processes are necessary to understanding literature, 2) cognitive processes can be stimulated by carefully selected literature which 3) can encourage the oral exchanges of ideas and the development of thought processes; (with reference to personality development) 1) Books can play an important part in children's personality development, 2) Books can have a therapeutic effect (bibliotherapy), 3) literature can help to understand feelings, 4) (because) children can identify with characters in a book who experience similar feelings; (with reference to socialization) 1) Literature can help children to become sensitive to the feelings of others, 2) Literature can contribute to children's realization that both boys and girls can achieve in a wide range of roles, 3) Non-sexist books provide models and stimuli for discussion, 4) Literature makes children aware of different views.

Donna Norton, and others like her, it should be noted, do not actually provide any kind of real connection between the empirical research or scientific theories and the assertions such as those described above. For though they quote theories such as those of Piaget, and various other researches, relying on their 'factual' or 'reality' value for authority, they almost invariably provide no explanation for why literature (there is often no reason provided for the use of the term 'literature' as opposed to 'books' other than the inference that 'literature' encompasses their 'appropriate' books) and the process of reading literature, should cause certain educational or developmental goals to be attained. Not only are they making such broad claims that they are actually saying very little, but there seems to be no consideration of the question (in books such as Norton's):

if reading a certain book would cause their 'child' to, for instance, adopt one opinion rather than another, or to feel an emotion, or to understand an unknown view; how does reading this literature accomplish this?

These questions are directly involved in debates on the influence of books and literature on the readers, and the dynamics of reading. It is clear that views such as Donna Norton's are based on specific assertions concerning the nature of (children's) reading and thinking. Almost every writer in the area of children's books makes statements concerning the nature of the effects and influences of literature and books. The various assumptions are, however, not even self-evident or unproblematic within the terms of reference of these writers as they sometimes seem to consider them to be, just as the general premises concerning reading, learning, reading-influence, and reading-effect are not self-evident or unproblematic. Jerome Bruner (Actual Minds, Possible Worlds) argues that

> we may ... wish to discover how and in what ways text affects the reader and, indeed, what produces such effects on the reader as do occur...Can a "psychology" of literature describe systematically what happens when a reader enters the Dublin of Stephen Daedalus through the text of 'Portrait'? The usual way of approaching such issues is to invoke psychological processes or mechanisms that operate in 'real life'.

'But', Bruner concludes, 'such proposals explain so much that they explain very little. They fail to tell why some stories succeed and some fail to engage the reader ... And above all, they fail to provide an account of the processes of reading and of entering a story.'[37]

Within these terms of special reading-processes which may or may not

engage a reader, some literary critics have tried to account, in several ways, for psychological processes of what they describe as 'entering a text'. Several of the ways in which the readers are said to negotiate a text are mentioned in children's literary criticism. 'Identification' is a frequently used term describing the way, it is argued, a child-reader relates to characters in a text: a child may, it is asserted, recognize these characters as being somehow similar to itself, and be therefore moved by the character's adventures and feelings as a kind of (re-)experiencing of its own thoughts and emotions. Judith Thompson and Gloria Woodard use 'identification' in attempting to grasp the dynamics of reading:

> One limitation to most of these books, however, is their emphasis on, identification with, and relevance only to middle class children. For too many black children, they depict an environment removed from their immediate experience ... Identification for the young black reader rests in the central character's intimate knowledge of the black subculture.[38]

Dorothy Broderick adds that 'reading [has] to do with the readers' search for self-identification and their need to learn about persons different from themselves.'[39] Robert Leeson partially agrees with Thompson and Woodard and Broderick when he concludes that

> it is argued that the working-class child does not want 'only to read about itself' and likes to escape into a different world in its reading. This is true, but only half the truth. For a full range of reading experience, the reader needs to identify, to recognise himself or herself, as well as to escape and have vicarious pleasure or thrills.[40]

Margaret and Michael Rustin also write: 'Good writing for children both describes complex mental life, and invites its readers to share in it by identification, the

narratives themselves providing material for reflection.'[41]

Gloria Mattera, in discussing possible dynamics of bibliotherapy, identifies three processes in reading: 'identification' (which she defines, from Russell and Shrodes, as 'real or imagined affiliation of one's self with a character or group in the story read',[42]); 'catharsis' (defined by Mattera from Spache as the Aristotelian 'feeling of purgation following identification with a character's motivations and conflicts',[43]); and 'insight' (defined by Mattera from Spache as 'achieving awareness of one's own motivations, needs and problems, and considering a course of action, which, like that of the book character, may lead to successful solutions.'[44]). It can be noted that all three of Mattera's aspects of reading are based on, or derived from, initial 'identification'. The duality of functions reading fulfils in relation to the child, as far as these writers are concerned, is again reflected in these statements: it is a learning experience as well as emotionally rewarding and enjoyable in itself. The process of reading is regarded as having to do with a specific mode of recognition of 'the self' in 'the other', as well as with learning about that which is different from 'the self'. Epstein suggests that

> the appreciation of literature resembles the process of growing up in that they both involve the discovery of distinctions between the self and the world: the aim of both is differentiation, concreteness and the development of a character of one's own. This is why literature is exciting and why it is, finally, inseparable from life.[45]

A consideration of what 'identification' is actually meant to be in reading, and why this term is so extensively used in children's literary criticism, reveals that the supposed ability of the child to recognise itself in the text, and the child's

dependence on this ability to, supposedly, understand and emotionally respond to a text, both explain to the adult critics the nature of children's reading, and some of the differences between adult literature and children's literature. Children's literature is legitimized as being necessarily somehow 'different' from adult books, if children's reading is indeed based primarily on 'identification': for then the children's books need to provide the grounds for 'identification' by providing the discovered 'essential' child - or at least a child-image which will offer possibilities for 'identification' to as many 'real' child-readers as possible. Jacqueline Rose, again, disputes even the most basic possibility of this when she argues that 'the idea that "children's literature's" main quality is that it speaks to children -all children -ignores the socio-economic, political and cultural divisions in which all of society, including children and language, are caught.'[46] J.R.R. Tolkien agrees with Rose: 'Children as a class - except in a common lack of experience they are not [a class].'[47]

But even the very notion of 'identification' itself is discussed as being inherently problematic, besides leading critics back to the problem of lack of consensus on the 'essential child', for: what does it actually mean to these critics to 'identify' with a character in, or part of, a book? Anthony Storr writes that

> reading which produces an emotional effect rather than conveying information does not put things into the mind, but rather objectifies contents which are already present. If this were not so, we should be unable to react emotionally to a book at all. There has to be a lock within us which the key of the book can fit, and if it does not fit, the book is meaningless to us.[48]

If 'identification' thus refers to that key fitting into that lock, that moment of understanding in which the reader supposedly must then feel or think something like: 'yes! I have felt/thought/seen/heard that myself and so I know what this means or feel as this feels', the 'identification' is nothing other than a cover-term for the possibility any reader has of comprehending any text (or an other person, or culture) from within the confines of his own experience. And, as Bruner pointed out, this can be said to explain so much that it explains very little. It does not explain how people, as readers or in general, can then ever come to understand anything different or new, or how and why persons look for and recognise themselves in what is not-themselves.

'Identification', in adult literary criticism, is as problematic a term as in children's literary criticism, as Bruner's criticisms of the concept indicate. The notion of 'identification' as the basis for the dynamics of reading seems to offer little illumination of the problems the children's literature critics try to discuss, limiting them, as it does, exclusively to some sort of image of the child (or any reader) perpetually reading 'itself'. D.W. Harding, similarly, wrote: 'Popular borrowings from psychology have made great play with the ideas of identification and vicarious satisfaction as basic processes in the reader's response ... if they are not taken literally -and in this context they never are - they are nothing but fancy labels for much more familiar and ordinary processes, chiefly for imaginative insight into what another person may be feeling, and the contemplation of possible human experiences which we are not at the moment going through ourselves.'[49] Harding, instead, argues that 'what is spoken of as "identification"

with a character in a novel or play is a high degree of empathy with his supposed experience and an intensely interested contemplation of the events he takes part in.'[50] Harding goes on to reformulate other terms conventionally used to describe the dynamics of reading. He rejects, for instance, the notion of 'wish-fulfilment' in reading: 'No wish is literally fulfilled ... More accurately, [the readers] and the author are engaged in wish formulation or definition ... one variety of the technique by which in everyday social intercourse we invite each other to contemplate, and to evaluate, possible events and outcomes.'[51] Harding also feels that any 'imaginative sharing' of the reader of experiences with characters in a novel provides 'a hopelessly incomplete account of what goes on between reader and novel .... Even for naive readers this is much less than the whole process', and he suggests that besides empathising with the characters, we also evaluate what they do, and, in some measure, accept and reject values implied by the interests and attitudes of the author.[52]

Sara Goodman Zimet examines the discussion concerning the 'effects' and 'influences' of reading. Zimet starts out by listing what is involved in these ideas about reading, and we find on this list many of the beliefs that writers on children's books, such as Donna Norton, seem to adhere to:

> Most people believe that reading is essential if we wish to function even at a minimal level in today's technological society .... Print, in [religion and social reformers through history], was believed to be the catalyst for social reform and eternal happiness in this life .... Inspired by the belief that what is read does indeed influence the reader ... they believe, therefore, that the printed message is an instrument of socialization .... Maslow (1954) and Bernard (1961) have suggested that books have a favourable influence on children's

> personality development ... Singh (1973) and Howe (1971) contend that gross stereotypes, subtle distortions and omissions in references to females, racial, ethnic and social class groups in children's literature and textbooks play a direct part in forming children's attitudes towards themselves and towards others .... But,

Zimet asks, 'what do we actually know about what reading does for us or to us?'[53] She then goes on to discuss research in the area of reading and reading-influence. Zimet locates the reason for the lack of extensive research in the problem of the complexity of unravelling the effects of reading from the many other possible sources of influence:

> ... there are so many other factors operating at the same time. Peer pressure, family and community values, religious beliefs and so on - all impinge on the individual to create his or her particular value system.[54]

Zimet mentions personal testimony as one proof of the influence of books, and singles out Smith's research (1948)[55], in which over five-hundred fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students were asked how they were influenced by reading, and Shirley's (1969)[56] study of a group of 240 secondary pupils concerning this same question. Lind (1936) and Weingarten (1954)[57] asked college students how they were influenced by reading. Zimet reports that

> all four groups indicated that their attitudes, ideas and behaviour were affected [but] the similarity within groups and between groups ended here. On the one hand, there was tremendous variability among individuals as to how they thought their attitudes, values and behaviour were influenced. On the other hand, not all books affected all individuals in the same way. Thus, the intent of an author either to persuade, to inform or to entertain may produce a response in the reader that had not been anticipated.[58]

In discussing research into the effects of reading in children on attitudes towards minority groups, Zimet goes on to relate that

> all four investigators [Jackson, 1944; Fisher, 1965; Tauran, 1965; Litcher and Johnson, 1967] reported significant changes. When characters belonging to minority groups were presented in a favourable light the attitudes of the readers moved in a positive direction...; when characters belonging to minority groups were presented in an unfavourable light, attitudes of readers moved in a negative direction.[59]

But Zimet emphasizes that the studies do not make clear whether the students were not simply conforming to the wishes of the teacher, rather than responding to their reading, and 'there is therefore some room for doubt about the extent to which attitudes were genuinely influenced.'[60] In any case, she adds, Jackson's study found possible changes of attitude to have become undetectable only two weeks after the initial experiment.[61]

Other studies Zimet discusses (Fisher, 1965; Biskin and Hoskinsson, 1975)[62] demonstrated that in examining the difference between the effects of reading alone and reading combined with discussion, it appeared that reading combined with discussion had greater effects than reading on its own, and that in Biskin and Hoskinsson's work 'discussion was demonstrated to be a crucial factor in determining the impact of the reading experience.'[63] A similar result was obtained from studies on bibliotherapy (Russell and Shrodes, 1950)[64], suggesting that therapeutic goals 'are not accomplished simply by reading the printed page, however. Discussions of the reading material with a therapist are considered

crucial to the success of such a programme.'[65] Dianne Monson and Bette Peltola mention researches with similar conclusions (Hayes, 1969; Lancaster, 1971; Mattera, 1961)[66] in their annotated bibliography of research in children's literature. Gloria Mattera, in her research Bibliotherapy in a Sixth Grade, felt unable to allocate responsibility for positively judged changes to reading without admitting that the results might be attributed equally to teachers' attitudes, increased or different teacher involvement with pupils in her experimental (bibliotherapy) group, or combinations of factors. She concluded that

> one of the strongest sources of evidence for support of the hypothesis was the observation of the investigator. No assertion is made that books alone produced a change in behaviour, or that these changes were permanent, but day-to-day observation of the children produced evidence that the books used in individual and group bibliotherapy were helping children to solve their personal problems.[67]

However, Mattera adds,

> [this] main hypothesis was not supported by the results of the California Test of Personality. According to these results, the children in the experimental group were less well-adjusted than they were at the beginning of the study. The control group made no significant change.[68]

Mattera tries to explain this discrepancy, and substantiate her claims for reading-influence, by speculating that the experimental group had acquired a 'broader and deeper insight into their own and others' problems... Thus, the California Test of Personality was less valid...'[69] Some researches seemed to demonstrate some effects of reading (on its own) as bibliotherapy or in changing attitudes of racial

prejudice, but these also seemed to be open to interpretation in the light of Zimet's caveat concerning pupils' possible efforts to comply with teachers, (such as supplying responses deemed desired to questionnaires; Appleberry, 1969)[70], and/or concerned specific small groups (one class of pupils from an 'academic' highschool; Frankel, 1972)[71]. Only Lewis (1966) is reported as measuring significant effects of reading (on its own)[72]. All researchers seem to agree concerning the difference of the impact of reading combined with discussion to reading on its own, and the difficulty of ascertaining any decisive influence of reading above, for instance, improved teacher-pupil or parent-child interaction as a result of the introduction of experiments with reading and books.

Even with researches using the same terminology of a 'real' child and reading-influence, then, it seems that assertions such as those of Norton were difficult to validate. This may not invalidate such 'educators" works either, though, since most teacher's and librarian's guides, such as those of Norton, Sadker and Sadker, Glazer and Williams, and Lonsdale and Mackintosh, are very much concerned with the totality of what they call 'experiencing' literature. As teachers' guides they often consider children's books in the context of classroom discussions, drama, or play, and as such attempt to guide teachers' ideological and emotional ideals and commitments, and, subjugated to these directives, acquaint them with children's books seen in those terms. They do not discuss or acknowledge discussions concerning specific differences between possible effects of reading on its own, and reading and discussion, or the dependence of their educational goals on uniform interpretations of the text by all readers, or the implications of

continued and consistent reinforcement in all areas (not only reading) of 'desirable' ideas and ideologies. And in failing to address these issues, they still help to obscure the discussions on children, children's books, and children's literature (in this field where all works on children's literature are still very much taken together), allowing the assumptions and assertions about children and reading to operate as 'truth' and 'reality', unquestioned and unconsidered.

Aside from discussions within empirical research, however, there are also other theoretical models and ideas within the fact/fiction model that point to different assumptions from those of these critics. As Gordon Bower and Ernest Hilgard warn in their Theories of Learning:

> To move from [learning] theory to [educational] practice is not all that easy. The naive view is that the basic researcher stocks a kind of medicine cabinet with aids to solve the problems of the teacher. When a problem arises, the teacher can take a psychological principle from the cabinet and apply it like a bandage or ointment to solve the educational problem.[73]

Barry Wadsworth, for instance, also examines the implications of the much-quoted Piaget for children's reading, in his Piaget for the Classroom Teacher. He concludes that texts must be meaningful to children in order to be comprehended in the wider sense, and that 'who knows what words are meaningful to the individual child? The child knows!'[74] From this premise, Wadsworth goes on to emphasize that teachers should

> ensure that any written language experience is meaningful to the individual child. This does not mean selecting an appropriate grade-level reading book ... There is no reason to believe that the words

> and sentences in these texts will be meaningful to the individual child.[75]

He acknowledges that this type of 'matching' of each individual child to a book is time-consuming for the teachers, but repeats that this is what should happen.

The difficulty perceived in ascertaining the reading needs of the pupils, whether by generalized ability or issues (such as with the educators), or in the individual child, is addressed by Jeneva Lewis' research into A Comparison of Kindergarten Teachers' Perceptions of Children's Preferences in Books with the Children's Actual Preferences.[76] Lewis' conclusion was that teachers were only able to predict pupils' tastes in two of six possible categories of books (with 'children in general' and 'history and science', but not with 'children in ghetto areas', 'Negro heritage', 'animals', and 'fantasy').[77] Carleton Washburne and Mabel Vogel argued that strong differentiations in their results concerning children's reported enjoyment of books read were 'due to the difference between books freely selected and those required ..., there are certain factors that apparently influence a particular child to read a book which usually is interesting only to children of much higher or lower degrees of reading ability. These factors outweigh those which result in the book's being classified as belonging to a certain grade.'[78] Wadsworth also draws the conclusion from Piaget's theories that

> reading does not become an agent in the child's thinking - an operative instead of a figurative activity - until formal operations are established...Furth (1970) states that propositional thinking does not typically develop until the ages of eleven or twelve, not permitting the joining of reading and thinking until that time. It is during the period of formal operations that reading can play a part

> in expanding the intellect of the child and can become a challenging operative activity.[79]

'Eleven or twelve', it should be noted, is considerably older than the ages at which the children's literature criticism mentioned above starts to emphasize the beneficial effects of children's reading (from babyhood onwards), while they also claim to base themselves on Piaget, or theories derived from Piaget's stages of cognitive development. Part of the reason, also perhaps, that such divergent claims can be made for children's reading on the grounds of one theoreticians' work, under the pressures of intent and purpose, may be because, as Wadsworth points out, Piaget himself did very little research into reading as such, and when asked at a conference once about reading, apparently replied he had no opinion on it.[80]

In the discussions represented up to this point children's literature critics and writers on children and reading reflect different views on reading and its place in the 'child world' they assume. These discussions are determined by hopes and wishes for the effects or non-effects of reading on 'children' and 'adults', produced by socio-political, cultural, and personal needs and ideals, analogous to the representation of the formulations of values and ideals by the educators discussed in previous chapters. We can find further analogies to the educators' arguments and purposes throughout children's fiction criticism and its views concerning 'children', 'adults', and books.

Chapter Six. 'Children's' Literature Criticism and 'Adult' Literature Criticism.

The influence and effects of children's literature, as asserted by children's literature critics such as Donna Norton, Michele Landsberg, the Sadkers, Masha Rudman, Edward Salmon, and many others, are not only questioned by rivalling interpretations and arguments concerning the reading-process, and the consequences of literacy, but in further ways by other types of children's literature critic. These differences are also expressed with reference to varying concepts of child-readers, and their reading, at cognitive, emotional, and ideological (socio-political) levels, just as the varied theoretical and empirical arguments mentioned earlier address themselves to these issues with differing results. The most crucial difference between the critics like Norton, who assume recognizable unified influences from reading, and a second category of critics, hinges on generalization and individualization: that is to say, the 'Norton' type critics are ideologically committed to attempting to ascertain a predictability and uniformity of response of children to (certain) books (comparable to Luther), while another group of critics are ideologically committed to the individuality and non-predictability of children's response to books and literature (comparable to Erasmus). I shall thus henceforth refer to the 'Norton-critics', on the one hand, and to the second group of critics as the 'pluralists', with reference to their central interest in allowing for a plurality in the interpretations and uses individual children, they say, attach to books. The pluralists are mostly opposed to, and critical of, the Norton critics' critical attempts to discuss children, reading, and books, but have largely found it

impossible to deal with the presence of some concept of 'child' in connection with the field of children's books. The pluralists, too, assign powerful functions and influence to reading for 'children', but now with varying and unpredictable responses and results.

The pluralists' disagreements with the Norton critics spring from two main points: firstly, the pluralists observe not only that, in their view, individual children seem to make significantly different uses and interpretations of books, but also, secondly, that the Norton critics disagree amongst themselves, not about the claim that books influence children, but concerning the actual influences these books may have. This second point, the actual varying interpretations made by the Norton critics of books on behalf of children, is unsolvable: assuming different child-readers leads to different interpretations. Effectively, this undermines the Norton critics' critical efforts to a great extent. Important social issues such as racism, for instance, have lead Norton critics with the same anti-racist orientation to differ utterly in their judgement of a book: Bob Dixon praises Paula Fox's The Slave Dancer as being 'a novel of great horror and as great humanity ... [approaching] perfection as a work of art'[1], while Sharon Bell Mathis calls it 'an insult to black children'[2], and Binnie Tate claims it 'perpetuates racism ... [with] constantly repeated racist implications and negative illusions [sic]'[3]. Donna Norton mentions Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn, amongst others, as being at the centre of a similar controversy[4]. The assumption of the books' influencing children makes these issues crucial: does, or can, The Slave Dancer perpetuate racism or does it counteract it?

If we examine some of the pluralists' views in detail we will see how this individualization of response, whether of the critic herself, or of the critic on behalf of a postulated child-reader, is central to their clashes with the Norton critics. That the clash of opinions leads to heated debates becomes apparent not only in Dixon, Mathis and Tate's opposing views, but also, for instance, if we look at the author Jan Needle's critique[5] of Michele Landsberg's Reading For the Love of It. Landsberg, as we saw earlier, is a classic Norton critic, who believes passionately in the importance of the pleasure she feels books provide children with, and in their enrichment of the child's emotional and intellectual capacities. She does not advocate censorship or restriction of children's bookchoices, but feels that

> adult responsibility ... is not to deny, but to add, enrich, stimulate, amplify. To turn away with an indifferent shrug from helping children to choose books is not good enough. If anything goes, nothing matters. And children's literature does matter ... intensely.[6]

With this view in mind Landsberg sets out to show in her book, 'step by step, how any adult can become a skilled and confident chooser of the best books for the particular child.'[7] Jan Needle criticizes Landsberg's book for its 'total lack of doubt' in its correctness in picking books for children, according to what he calls their 'respectability factor'. Needle adds that 'the fact that Landsberg's book is now being used in colleges of Education in Canada filled me with despair.' Jan Needle argues that 'adult' critics cannot predict the uses to which a child will put a book. Like Needle, the author Nina Bawden protests against many reviewers'

and critics' habit of treating 'children' as 'an object in a sociological survey, an unformed creature without will or thought of his own, to be tamed, educated, never learned from - forced into their way of thinking.'[8]

Another article discussing unpredictability and individuality of this 'child's' involvement with reading is Elaine Moss' 'The "Peppermint" lesson'.[9] In this article, Moss explains how her daughter, Alison, became attached to a book (Peppermint) about an initially unwanted kitten, that is finally given to a little girl, who loves it, and wins first prize in the Cat show with it. Moss describes the book:

> Like the words, the pictures are totally without distinction. Comic-style kids and cats, blobby colours, accentuated sashes and splashes. Totally expendable, one would have thought: a watered-down, vulgarized 'Ugly Duckling'.[10]

She then goes on to explain what later occurred to her as being the reason for Alison's attachment to the book: 'Alison is an adopted child ... she was taken home, like Peppermint, to be loved and cared for and treasured.'[11] Elaine Moss adds that a 'technically efficient and typographically superior'[12] book explaining adoption to pre-school children, which she had provided her daughter with, did not seem to inspire the same reaction as Peppermint. Moss concludes that this type of 'artistically worthless book - hack-written and poorly illustrated -'[13] may therefore 'be more important to that child's development than all the Kate Greenaway Medal-winning books put together.'[14]

Gillian Avery amplifies on these views, writing that

> what occurs to me amid the welter of theory that has always gone on about what a child should read is the encouraging thought that you never know what he is going to make of the material with which you confront him. He has his own defence against what he doesn't like or doesn't understand in the book that is put in front of him. He ignores it, subconsciously perhaps, or he makes something different from it ... they extract what they want from a book and no more.[15]

Peter Dickinson in his 'Defence of Rubbish'[16] argues, like Elaine Moss, that it may sometimes be those books that he defines as 'rubbish ... all forms of reading matter which contain to the adult eye no visible value either aesthetic or educational'[17], which a child, or children, may put to some use, or enjoy. Briefly, Dickinson suggests children might use 'rubbish' to learn about aspects of a culture; to feel they are part of a group; to discover for themselves what they enjoy reading or might come to prefer; because 'easy' reading might provide a psychological sense of security, comfort, or reassurance; because people in general might be better off with a mixture of 'good' and 'bad' reading (Dickinson feels this is a 'more nebulous' point); and because, finally, 'children' may perceive qualities or values in something 'adults' would automatically dismiss.[18] D.W. Harding supports this kind of idea when he speculates that

> children have to make delayed discoveries of what they have in some sense known a long time - whether about Santa Claus or sex or religion. From this angle there may be a thoroughly valid defence of novels that offer an improbably sweetened taste of experience.[19]

What is typical, however, is that in both Dickinson's and Harding's statements we again see expressed defining views of 'children' and their reading: even in pleading

for the freedom to choose to read 'rubbish' Dickinson and Harding use arguments based on the 'good of "the child"'. Their assertions, thus, are not in such direct opposition to the Norton critics' views as they may seem. They only actually differ in defining what books are 'appropriate' to their 'child's' development. Dickinson includes 'rubbish', and Harding 'improbably sweetened' novels, as 'appropriate' in the sense of fulfilling constructive functions in children's growth. The result of views such as those of Needle, Moss, or Avery, or those of Dickinson and Harding, are the same: they attempt to subvert the self-assigned role of the Norton critic as the selector of books for children in accordance with an assigned predictable response, whether it is because the pluralists claim that 'an adult' cannot predict for 'a child' what a book will mean or be to her, or whether it is because, as Dickinson claims, all books may have some function for the child-reader.

The pluralists' views clash with the Norton critics' views on the nature of the influence of books only at this particular level: if, as the pluralists claim, the child-reader can, or does, filter out what it cannot comprehend, absorbs mainly only what it is capable of dealing with, or transforms the books according to its personal emotional (or other) needs and desires, then the books cannot function, as the Norton critics assume they do, purely as a kind of critic-fed supply-line of new data for the entirely - emotionally and cognitively, unlike in Locke - 'tabula rasa' child. However, most critics, 'Norton' or pluralist, both equally discern an important role for reading with respect to children. It is, essentially, the role of the critic, and, attendant upon that, the type of 'freedom' to be allocated to the child-

readers, that the critics disagree on.

Other attempts by critics to develop critical approaches to children's books which break away from the Norton critics' methods, also prove similarly problematic. Lillian Smith, for instance, in her book The Unreluctant Years, first states her intention of 'consider[ing] children's books as literature, and discover[ing] some of the standards by which they can be so judged ... They are a portion of universal literature and must be subjected to the same standards of criticism.'[20] Here are some of the typical comments Smith then makes: 'children may not consciously recognize their search for lasting truth in their indiscriminate reading of fairy tales ... and all the variety of literature that brings delight and rouses a warm response in their minds'[21]; and:

> there is much in Gulliver's Travels that children cannot understand. They take what they like from it; and what they like best is the inexhaustible imagination that pictured and peopled the Lilliputian world ... To them it is a story as alive today as when it first appeared in 1726.[22]

Another such self-styled 'literary' critic is Dorothy Neal White, who writes that

> adults out of touch with children's books frequently infer that the bad book can have only two vices, immorality and bad grammar. If a book is not littered with split infinitives, and does not incite its reader to arson or robbery with violence, it is assumed to be harmless ... The worst fault in present-day children's books is not any flagrant departure from formal grammar, but the colourless, dull, passionless use of language which ultimately ruins for a child his sense of the resources and vitality of the English tongue.[23]

Just a few lines down, Dorothy White is condemning books on the grounds of

'snobbery'[24] and the 'mishandling of personal relationships.'[25] These 'literary' critics are still reading on behalf of their vision of the child-reader; they are still inhabiting their 'child' mind.

The assumed nature of the education-amusement divide as the establishment of children's fiction as an educational non-force, as I discussed in previous chapters, leads to these repeated attempts to establish 'literary' criteria for children's fiction which are asserted to function in the same way as 'adult literary criticism' (which adult literary criticism?!): an 'affective' fallacy seems to be duly accounted for, and yet, as we saw with Lillian Smith and Dorothy White, the 'child-readers" supposed feelings, responses, preferences, and needs, pervade their criticism. Thus children's literary criticism overwhelmingly cannot rid itself of all these 'child-readers', as it seems to want to do by referring to 'literary' criteria, by which they seem to mean some absolute, child-independent qualities of text. Functioning, without fully realising it, however, as the last moral out-post of the liberal arts educational ideals, the children's literature criticism remains directed and controlled by an unacknowledged power: the fundamental assumption that 'appropriate' or 'good' literature (as opposed to 'books' as a whole) will influence, or affect, and, with a bit of luck, influence in desirable ways. This is the case with 'Norton', 'pluralist', and 'literary' critics. Joan Glazer and Gurney Williams find themselves, as a consequence of both trying to account for variability in child-reader response, and for the 'adult' critics' 'child-reader' response, writing that: 'good' children's books have to do with 'strong materials - good plots, rich settings, well-developed characters, important themes, and artistic

styles ... bold and imaginative language'[26], and that this 'freshness ... comes from the author. And in the author it begins with an understanding of who the child is.'[27]; but even if children do not like these 'good' books, they may still be

> good literature ... built of strong materials ... the likes and dislikes of children do not determine the quality of literature ... Books must be judged as literature on their own merits. And children should be given excellent literature.[28]

The paradox of these statements hinges on the question of whether the attraction of a book, for their child-readers, does indeed lie in some essential truth about 'the child' being grasped by a children's book author. If this would be the case then these children would love books these critics claim are good because of their identification of this essential child in the works. It should be noted that, if this is the case, then the critics are assuming they do indeed have the capacity to identify this crucial 'essential child' within the books on behalf of children (in practice this is, of course, the assumption most critics are working on anyway). If children don't feel attracted to books which critics claim contain the 'essential child', then the adult critics cease to have any function for their child reader: on what other basis can they link the child to the book?

Bernard Lonsdale and Helen Mackintosh, like Glazer and Williams, seem to want to establish a distinction between 'literary' qualities and child-reader suitability, which they then also almost simultaneously undermine by referring back to the child as a measure of these 'literary' qualities. They advocate that teachers guide children through literature by, firstly, knowing what children 'are like at

[various] years of age; what their reading interests are; what [their] reading skills; what their attitudes are towards reading'[29], and, secondly, by knowing 'what literature is - what makes a book a good book; what authors and illustrators are contributing to a rich body of literature for boys and girls; how are the stories geared to the needs, interests, and abilities of children.'[30] Donna Norton, similarly, writes that

> the criteria usually used to evaluate children's fiction include elements of plot, characterization, setting, theme, style, and point of view. Also, it is necessary to be concerned with other characteristics: relevance, suitability, potential popularity, and the development of nonstereotypes in the literature.[31]

Michele Landsberg defines literary 'merit' as deriving from the following issues:

> Is the language original, fresh, and interesting? Are the characters wooden, or do they live and breathe on the page? Do they speak in individual voices, so you can tell who's talking just by the characteristic speech patterns? ... If it's a fantasy, does the author create a believable world, no matter how strange, and abide by the rules of that world so that your belief in it is never shaken, or do you come thudding back to the banal commonplace with maddening regularity? If the story is an adventure, does it convince you?[32],

and Landsberg adds that 'the point of developing such [critical expertise] ... is that good books can do so much for children.'[33]

Nicolas Tucker, as already discussed, also suggested that attaining a type of psychological accuracy or truth concerning the nature of 'the child' is precisely a part of 'literary' quality in a children's book. We have already examined the problematic aspects of the acceptance of these assumptions with reference to

children's reading. Supposed possibilities for 'identification', taken as the primary basis of referral for examining and explaining children's reading and children's literature lead us back to the attempts to define the 'essence' of 'child' as the measure of children's book quality and characteristics, and an acceptance of the predictability and uniformity of children's reading-response. All these ideas point us back to attempting to determine 'the truth' about 'the child', and ascertaining which book captures this in the 'best' way, and require us to claim that both the essential attraction for children of 'good' books, and the very defining characteristic of 'good' books, lies in the capturing of these 'truths' about childhood. Tucker and other Norton critics feel able to sustain this line of argument by relying on assumptions concerning the dynamics of reading, and, for instance, their interpretation of Piaget's theories (or on any other theory or image they approve of) as supplying sufficient measure of 'the truth' about 'the child' to determine the quality of the books they evaluate.

Whether these Norton critics concentrate on psychology or pedagogy, they also, clearly, feel the necessity of referring to this elusive 'literary' side of texts. They all somehow express the idea that though books may contain desirable (to them) psychological, psychoanalytical, moral, ethical, or social 'messages' (relying on assumptions of uniform interpretation), they have to take into account how these 'messages' are put into words. Donna Norton argues: 'Children need to listen to and read fine literature and appreciate that authors not only have something to say but also that they say it extremely well'[34]. We can thus see that the attempted separation of self-defined 'child-based' and 'literary' judgements is

not sustained: the critics' conclusion comes down to the claim that the 'literary' quality of children's books depends on either the authors', or the critics', knowledge of the 'truth' about 'the child'. Other examples of this type of claim are the writings of critics and authors such as Elisabeth Nesbitt: 'The best writers of children's books ... permitted children to dance and to dream, to laugh and to cry, ... they protected and nourished the capacity for wonder in children'[35]; E.B. White:

> You have to write up, not down. Children are demanding .... they accept, almost without question, anything you present them with, as long as it is presented honestly, fearlessly and clearly ... they love words that give them a hard time [36],

Leon Garfield: 'One writes so that children can understand, which means writing as clearly, vividly and truthfully as possible ... words, must live for children, so must people'[37]; and Joan Aiken:

> Children have a strong natural resistance to phoney morality. They can see through the adult with some moral axe to grind almost before he opens his mouth.[38]

'Real child readers', as we have seen, are now entities excluded from this 'literary' or 'educational' discussion: as Glazer and Williams put it, 'the likes and dislikes of children do not determine the quality of literature'[39].

Some children's literature criticism, however, in its moral conviction of acting for the good of the child, has tried to acknowledge the inconsistencies, variations and paradoxes in its constant struggle to preserve the image of being

able to take into account, in one blow, both a book's predicted appeal to child-readers, and the adult's critical evaluations. There are studies which perceive unbridgeable gaps between books that, it is claimed, children seem to want to read, and the books the adults claim they want them to love to read. Donna Norton quotes Carolyn Bauer and LaVonne Sanborne's research, which identified, on a list of 193 books which had won reader's choice awards, (only) 39 books which were also winners of literary merit awards.[40] Carleton Washburne and Mabel Vogel, authors of What Children Like to Read (the Winnetka graded book list), also ran into the difficulty of simultaneously recognizing and reconciling their view of what children seemed to prefer to read, with the adult critics' choices: 'On the basis of [collected] data this graded book list has been prepared ... Books that were [however] definitely trashy or unsuitable for children, even though widely read, have not been included in this list.'[41] They then go on to admit that there was, for instance, one series of books that was reported read by nine hundred children, and reported as enjoyed by 98 percent of them, but which was left off the list because all the adult critics rated the series as 'trashy'.[42] Alternatively, they also left books off the list which the adult critics had highly recommended (such as Thackeray's The Rose and the Ring, and Grahame's The Wind in the Willows), because, they write, the children would not read them, even after having been specifically asked to do so in order to provide an opinion for the graded book list.[43]

The inherent paradoxes of these systems of children's literature criticism also emerge in the actual critical judgements of specific books, as I have implied

throughout: differently constructed child-readers, based on the needs, desires, and opinions of the critics, lead to different critical views and recommendations. We already noted the clash of opinions on Paula Fox's The Slave Dancer, and Jan Needle's condemnation of Michele Landsberg's recommended booklist as being composed according to a 'respectability factor'. The, in itself unending, argument of which books actually can be defined as 'children's books' or 'children's literature' also reflect the various views on what in books constitutes this quality of 'child', and hence is regarded as defining the literary quality of the book, as we have seen. The definition of 'books written by adults for children' is inadequate, relying as it does almost exclusively on existing statements of conscious authorial intent, and so excluding the shifts of books in and out of the category of 'children's books'. If, by analogy to approximate differentiations made between 'books' and 'literature' in general terms ('approximate', because, after all, the question of what defines literature can hardly be said to have been unanimously resolved), we take 'children's literature' to be used as referring to a select group of 'children's books', constituting a canon, or supposedly qualitatively distinguished selection of books, then problems of definition occur especially toward the 'upper end' of this canon. The ubiquitously quoted Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, for instance, is quite happily discussed by many 'adult' literary critics, and considered part of the adult literary canon.

Some critics simply consider the 'best' children's books (in Britain these may be Charles Kingsley's The Water Babies, Lewis Carroll's 'Alices', Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows, J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings trilogy,

or Richard Adams' Watership Down) to be 'adult' books, leaving as 'children's books' those negatively defined as being 'any book with some connection with children not considered as being good enough for the (adult) literary canon'. This attitude, and definition, is consistent with the low level of prestige children's books and children's book criticism, are considered to have within literary circles, where children's books seem to be regarded as predominantly a form of popular or trivial book, or as educational tools, as Zohar Shavit pointed out. John Rowe Townsend agrees with Zohar Shavit when he declares that

> surveys of children's books are numerous, and so are aids to book selection, but discussion at any length of the work of individual contemporary writers is scarce. Such discussions may be thought unnecessary. I know from conversations over a period of years that there are intelligent and even bookish people to whom children's literature by definition is a childish thing which adults have put away ...[they] regard such an interest [in children's fiction] as an oddity, an amiable weakness.[44]

Julia Briggs supports this view, and argues, as Shavit also does, that 'the study and criticism of children's books ... is largely neglected in British universities ... children's books are commonly relegated to education departments, which regard their study as an aspect of teacher training rather than an end in itself.'[45]

Children's books have been studied from sociological and psychological points of view much as popular fiction has, with books such as the Winnetka Graded Book List; A.J. Jenkinson's What do Boys and Girls Read?[46]; Jean Kujoth's Reading Interests of Children and Young Adults[47]; George Norvell's The Reading Interests of Young People[48]; and the School Council's Children and their

Books[49], providing statistical analyses, graphs, and charts, of reading ages, abilities, interests, and preferences, in various groups of children. But it is seen as inherent to the status of 'children's' fiction that it is not a central study object of 'literary criticism', other than, occasionally, for re-evaluative or comparative purposes. There have been linguistic studies of popular fiction and children's books, but 'adult' literary criticism is self-defining in its attention to what it considers 'literary'. A 'skimming-off' of the 'best' children's books to the adult canon is regarded as refusing children's books as a whole any recourse to these methods of literary criticism. But it is part of the basing of all children's fiction criticism on 'the child' as separate from 'the adult'.

The specific attempts to provide definitions of 'children's fiction' obviously reflect the entire effort to invest 'the child' and 'the adult' with constitutive and distinctive essences. Again: within the attempts to formulate a definition various critics emphasize problems to a greater or lesser extent, but the limitations of the debate coincide with Nicholas Tucker's statement that 'although most people would agree that there are obvious differences between adult and children's literature, when pressed they may find it quite difficult to establish what exactly such differences amount to.'[50] Natalie Babbitt echoes this view:

> ...Someone must have the child in mind even if the author doesn't. Someone, editor or critic, must head a story in the right direction ... Everyone can tell a child's book from one for adults ... The difficulty lies in trying to define the essential nature of the difference.[51]

Peter Hunt sets out the discussion in its broadest terms when he sums up the

issue: "'children's books" is a very curious classification, a chaotic collection of texts that have in common nothing more than some undefined relationship to children.'[52] These critics acknowledge problems in formulating a defining essence for their understanding of 'children's fiction', but their relationship to assumed 'children' is a constant in these views.

Some critics have attempted to further list traits of 'children's fiction'. Glazer and Williams list

> a handful of obvious differences that set children's books apart. They tend to be shorter than adult novels. Illustrations are far more important... Plots are simpler. There may be more emphasis on the actions than on the musings of the main characters. And the main characters tend to be children...[53]

Fred Inglis reflects this listing when he argues that

> it is simply ignorant not to admit that children's novelists have developed a set of conventions for their work. Such development is a natural extension of the elaborate and implicit system of rules, orthodoxies, improvisations, customs, forms and adjustments which characterize the way any adult tells stories or simply talks at length to children.[54]

It is clear again from Inglis' comment how references to the child inevitably implicate an assumed 'adult'. Natalie Babbitt wonders further about the characteristics distinguished by, for instance, Glazer and Williams. Babbitt asks, in an article in which she sets out to question what she presents as conventional views of children's fiction,: 'there is ... no such thing as an exclusively adult emotion, and children's literature deals with them all ... [Does] a children's book use simple vocabulary geared to an untrained mind [?]: compare a little Kipling

to a little Hemingway and think again.'[55] It can be noted that Babbitt's comment can be read as if she is writing of children writing these books: author and reader are united in her remarks.

Finally, Inglis and Townsend both offer pragmatic definitions of children's fiction necessary to indicate the realm of their subsequent critical discussions in their books The Promise of Happiness[56] and Written for Children[57] respectively. Both seek to locate responsibility for the categorization of children's fictions in the publisher's listings and marketing. Townsend writes that

> in the short run it appears that, for better or worse, the publisher decides. If he puts a book on the children's list, it will be read by children (or young people), if it is read at all... [58].

Fred Inglis suggests that, for his purposes, 'it is more help to think of an overlap of readership and author's intentions, heavily shaded where the main lists of Puffins and Armada Lions fall, paler as the circle of readership overlaps less with the author's intentions'[59]. These discussions about classification are necessary for establishing and upholding the field of criticism within its own limits, and they are thus as much the product of the purposes the critics wish to express toward 'children'. As John Dewey argues: 'the tendency to forget the office of distinctions and classifications, and to take them as marking things in themselves is the current fallacy of scientific specialism ... our lists are only classifications for a purpose'[60].

The overall purpose of children's book criticism has, then, mainly been to endeavour to identify books which would embody their 'good' for their 'child'. 'Good' books are either books which are regarded as containing and transferring

correct moral values and ideas, or books which, by way of an abstract 'literary' power, defined in varying ways by critics, inspire children with 'higher' aims and virtues. The liberal arts tradition of education and literary criticism which identifies 'literary' qualities with a capacity to ennoble character and mind is the cornerstone of this policy, as we have seen. The development of ideas of a special and essential 'child' consciousness and vision required a critical language largely devoted to asserting and constructing links between particular aspects of textuality, reading, and that 'child' consciousness: this both validates differences perceived between adult and children's books, and supports the idea that children's books, in the main, have an autonomous, particular claim on, and therefore attraction for, children.

Considering the criticisms of children's fiction, and the discussions surrounding them, as involving not 'discovered' but 'invented' 'children' implies consequences for views of 'literature' as defining a privileged mode of experience. Gayatri Spivak, for instance, writes that 'everyone reads life and the world like a book ... The world actually writes itself with the many-levelled, unfixable intricacy and openness of a work of literature'[61]. The invented child, in this view, functions as texts reinvented and reinterpreted by each reader. If the pluralist children's literature critic tried to allow for individual children's interpretations and uses of their books, critics such as Derrida and Spivak attempt to resolve the separation between 'text' and 'reality', and, therefore, subvert the 'real' child most children's literature critics rely on. Releasing children's fiction criticism from the 'child' as extra-textual 'reality' involves this field in the larger debates surrounding the issues

of textuality and reading. We saw already in Karlheinz Stierle's writing how the 'child' has been used to give children-as-readers special status within his type of reader-response criticism. In order to understand the involvement of children's literature criticism with different ideas in adult literary criticism - instead of maintaining its isolation from them through the 'real child' barrier - let us look more closely at the writings of children's literature critics who, in line with Lillian Smith and Dorothy White, claim to be following 'adult literary criticism's' ideas and methods.

Some of the 'Norton' and 'pluralist' critics found themselves disassociating their 'literary' judgements from what they perceived to be 'children's' tastes or preferences, despite ultimately referring the origin of this literary quality back to essential child versions. However, there are critics who elaborate the disassociation between their judgements of the 'literary' values of children's books and 'the child'. We saw in Lillian Smith and Dorothy White's writing an effort to transfer (part of) their faith from 'children's literature' to 'literature'. Their views of children-as-readers still provided the basis for their views. Some critics attempt to move further away still from 'the child' and transfer their faith not only to 'literature', but also to the 'adults' as readers. These critics' defence to a Landsberg-type criticism of their supposed 'child-neglect' returns to the claim, shared by Norton and pluralist critics, that an absolute 'literary' value provides benefit to children. In other words, while these critics attempt to dispel the separate 'child-reader' as providing the standard for critical evaluation and judgement, they still maintain the extra-textual child reading as their ultimate goal

and reference-point.

John Rowe Townsend is one of these critics who emphasize 'literary' values. He writes:

> I believe that children's books must be judged as part of literature in general, and therefore by much the same standards as 'adult' books. A good children's book must not only be pleasing to children it must be a good book in its own right.[62]

This is in accordance with Townsend's view that 'children are not a separate form of life from people; no more than children's books are a separate form of literature from just books'.[63] There are other supporters of this argument that 'children reading' should be considered as part of 'people reading', and 'children's books' as part of 'books in general', and that, among these 'books in general' they may qualify for inclusion amongst a qualitatively based selection of 'good books' or 'literature'. Meindert DeJong, for instance, argues that 'creative books for children are the nearest thing to that purest of all literary forms, the lyric poem.'[64] C.S. Lewis remarked that 'no book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally (and often far more) worth reading at the age of 50.'[65] Paula Fox, like Townsend, DeJong, and Lewis, a children's book author, writes that 'what applies to good writing is, I think, absolute, whether for children or grown-ups or the blind or the deaf or the thin or the fat.'[66]

This type of criticism relies on the view that 'literature' provides a privileged mode of 'meaning', 'learning' or 'experience'. And this is inevitable in so far that the entire thrust of their undertaking operates - in its various ways - to secure 'the

good for the child'. The emotive quality of much children's literature criticism we have considered reveals its high moral and emotional stakes: to these critics children's fiction matters. Therefore these critics use a Richards-ian type of view on literature and its functions in educating and engaging emotions and aesthetic sensitivities. The liberal arts tradition that I have discussed thus provides not only many of the assumptions children's literature criticism relies on, but also links children's literature criticism to those 'adult' literary critical views which also base themselves on the liberal arts terminology. I.A. Richards sums up this basis when he writes that

> the arts, if rightly approached, supply the best data available for deciding what experiences are more valuable than others ... The enlargement of the mind, the widening of the sphere of human sensibility, is brought about through poetry ... the age-long controversy as to whether the business of poetry is to please or to instruct shows this well ... [but] neither term is appropriate to the greater forms of art ... Tragedy is still the form under which the mind may most clearly and freely contemplate the human situation, its issues unclouded, its possibilities revealed.[67]

Children's literature criticism on behalf of the 'child' is bound to Richards' critical motivation and terms of discussion - note Richards' reference to the issue of separating 'pleasure' from 'instruction' - through their joint commitment to the basic tenets of the liberal arts education. Frequently, however, it is also Richardian critics and terms which exclude children's fiction from the literary canon it is attempting to gain access to in the terms of the children's literature critics such as Townsend, Fox, and De Jong.

Thus, children's literature critics such as Townsend (I shall refer to them

henceforth as 'Townsendian' critics) are involved in a number of problematic areas: they are attempting to work with what they take to be the terms of an 'adult' literary criticism which excludes their field, and they present this 'adult' literary criticism as a unified, stable critical methodology, when, in fact, it is itself a compilation of different theoretical and practical perspectives, some of which are critical of each other. Finally, the Townsendians must also still account for their extra-textual 'child'.

We can see these topics reflected in Robert Leeson's response to Townsend's suggestions for criticism:

> Townsend's critical system would be book-centred rather than child-centred ... Well, let's agree ... Let's further agree that there is great disagreement over criteria in children's literature ... If the criteria are jumbled, it is because children's literature is in a state of expansion and change greater than at any time in its history. To bring together these disparate elements into a comprehensive (let alone unified) critical theory will take time and effort ... It will happen, I think, through a process of synthesis, not by the rejection of non-literary criteria ... Even less will it be done by a retreat into an aestheticism developed in the field of adult literature ... How pure are the purists? How influenced by non-literary criteria in a world where the events of the 1940's and 1950's upset the stable judgments of the 1920's and 1930's? ... [68]

Leeson thus apparently presupposes a 'comprehensive' critical theory in 'adult' 'book-centred' literary criticism, formed by 'literary criteria' which have prompted 'a retreat into aestheticism' by 'purists'. In suggesting aims for a children's literature criticism Leeson includes a critique of an adult literary criticism as he perceives it.

In emphasizing the 'literary' aspects of some children's fiction these 'book-

centred' critics are in effect relying on a reformulation of Northrop Frye's ideas about readers, texts, and reading. Leeson certainly seems to be referring to a Frye-type of New Criticism, or 'close reading', in his sketch of an 'adult' literary theory. In Townsend and Leeson's terms children's literature criticism in the 1970's was, and largely still is, in the position that Frye was formulating in his Anatomy of Criticism[69] when he wrote that his essays were a contribution to remedying the problem he discerned, namely that, in his view, 'there is as yet no way of distinguishing what is genuine criticism, and therefore progresses toward making the whole of literature intelligible, from what belongs only to the history of taste, and therefore follows the vacillations of fashionable prejudice ... We have no real standards to distinguish a verbal structure that is literary from one that is not.'[70] The consequence of this, Frye argued, was that a 'determinist fallacy' - which he defined as the attempt 'not to find a conceptual framework for criticism within literature, but to attach criticism to one of a miscellany of frameworks outside it ... whether Marxist, Thomist, liberal-humanist, neo-classical, Freudian, Jungian, or existentialist'[71] - operated. Frye wanted critics 'to make an inductive survey of [their] own field and let [their] critical principles shape themselves solely out of [their] knowledge of that field.'[72] Consider in relation to this Townsend's similarly oriented description of his ideal children's book critic:

> He should, I believe, approach a book with an open mind and respond to it as freshly and honestly as he is able; then he should go away, let his thoughts and feelings about it mature, turn them over from time to time, consider the book in relation to others by the same author and by the author's predecessors and contemporaries. If the book is for children he should not let his mind be dominated by the

fact; but neither, I think, should he attempt to ignore it.[73]

And, echoing Frye's definition of the 'determinist fallacy', Townsend argues that

> it is perfectly possible to judge books for children by non-literary standards. It is legitimate to consider the social or moral or psychological or educational impact of a book; to consider how many children, and what kind of children, will like it. But it is dangerous to do this and call it criticism.[74]

Frye and Townsend, on the basis of their 'liberal arts' beliefs also comment similarly of the need for 'good' criticism. Besides viewing this criticism, as Leavis does, as the result of the critics' engagement with, and judgement of, literature, Townsend quotes Henry S. Canby: 'Unless there is somewhere an intelligent critical attitude against which the writer can measure himself ... one of the chief requirements for good literature is wanting ... the author degenerates.'[75] Frye, in the same terms, argues that the literary critic is

> for better or worse, the pioneer of education and the shaper of cultural tradition. Whatever popularity Shakespeare and Keats have now is equally the result of the publicity of criticism [76],

and 'a public that tries to do without criticism, and asserts that it knows what it wants or likes, brutalizes the arts and loses its cultural memory.'[77] The Townsendians, in service of the 'child', are asking for attention for this 'literariness' of some children's fiction beyond a strictly 'determinist' interest in educational, psychological, or sociological aspects of children's reading and childhood, within a context where the division is sustained between textual and

non-textual narrative, or, as Frank Lentricchia puts it, between that 'romantic mystique of a unique literary discourse and unique literary values' and an 'objectively knowable lump of thereness .... reality.'[78]

Wayne Booth summarizes some of the terminology critics have used to discuss 'unique literary values' within this 'unique literary discourse'. Their terms of discussion, like that of many of the child- and book-centred children's fiction critics, having based themselves upon a distinction between literary discourse and extra-textual 'reality' or 'life', involve references to the interrelationships between these two 'worlds'. Booth writes, in considering 'general qualities on the basis of which critics since Flaubert have judged fiction'[79], that

> some critics would require the novel to do justice to reality, to be true to life, to be natural, or real, or intensely alive. Others would cleanse it of impurities, of the inartistic, of the all-too-human. On the one hand, the request is for 'dramatic vividness', 'conviction', 'sincerity', 'genuineness', 'an air of reality', 'a full realization of the subject', 'intensity of illusion'; on the other, for 'dispassionateness', 'impersonality', 'poetic purity', 'pure form'.[80]

We have seen all of these kinds of terms used by various children's literary critics with respect to their perception of the reality - correspondence of the 'literary' child with, or deviation from, the 'real' child. To give one more example of this cross-referral as it operates: Roger Duvoisin explains that 'one of the reasons for making a page which is well designed is to tell the story with more simplicity, more verve, clarity, and impact; to give importance to what is important; to eliminate what destroys the freshness, the originality of the page; in other words, to make a page which will be more easily read by the child.'[81]

The 'book-centred' Townsendian critics are knocking on the door of a Leavisite 'literature' of which Leavis wrote that 'we accept the field [of literature] to be more or less strictly delimited in accordance with the conception of literature as a matter of memorable works.'[82] Children's fiction, excluding some 'up-graded' books such as the 'Alice's', were usually not included in this canon. Frances Mulhern describes the 'adult' reader and critic prevalent in the criticism of F.R. Leavis:

> the values implicit in 'literary criticism' were drawn from [Leavis'] 'sense' of a community that he and his collaborators could neither identify in the real nor define in thought - except as part of a circle of meanings whose interdependence was exclusive and absolute. The perimeter of the circle marked the limits of persuasion: what 'Scrutiny's' audience did not 'know already' it could not be told.[83]

Children's literature criticism such as Townsend advocates tries to envisage such a community of 'adult' critics and readers for children's books, which will gain the books an entrance to literary prestige and canonization. In a way this is parallel to Elaine Showalter's suggestion that feminist criticism is concerned 'with the way in which the hypothesis of a female reader changes our apprehension of a given text, awakening us to the significance of its sexual codes.'[84] Her interest, in other words, lies in analyzing the assumptions guiding accepted interpretations of texts based on a 'male' reader. Townsendian critics are postulating an 'adult' reader to take the place of their 'child' reader, in order to reveal their 'literary' aspects. In this context, the Townsendian previous 'child' reader is also similar to Heilbrun's[85] view on male/female readers, which Culler explains as entailing the suggestion that

reading as a woman is not necessarily what occurs when a woman reads: women, Heilbrun argues, can, and have, read as men. Townsendians see critics as previously having solely read children's fiction 'as children', and they want critics to also read this fiction as 'adults' for the literary purposes which are ultimately to benefit the (child) reader.

However, this goal involves a self-created paradox: this criticism claims to remove the 'child reader' from its writings without removing an 'extra-textual' 'real' 'child. But it cannot be done. Relying on a distinction between textual and non-textual narratives - between 'fact' or 'reality' and 'fiction' seems to allow a separation of 'child' and 'adult' reader/critic to leave only an 'adult'. But the 'child' stays, albeit under cover of being a 'real' child outside the 'adult' critic, rather than the 'adult' critic being the 'child' by 'seeing through the eye / I of the child'. 'Children's' fiction criticism cannot do without some 'child'. We can see this reflected in attempts, on the part of Townsendian critics, to describe the grounds for introducing some 'children's fiction' into the literary canon. They try to formulate this in terms which leave the 'child' aside. We saw earlier some of the problems this raised in efforts to deal jointly with the 'child' and 'literary' qualities, such as in the Norton critics' works. Townsend and Alice Jordan offer the suggestion that 'literature' encompasses the books that stand the test of time. Townsend writes that 'where the works of the past are concerned, I have much faith in the shifting process of time - "time" being shorthand for the collective wisdom of a great many people over a long period.'[86] Jordan claims that 'until a book has weathered at least one generation and is accepted in the next, it can

hardly be given the rank of a classic and no two people are likely to be in full agreement as to what should be included in a list of them.'[87] Jordan also attempts further descriptive and prescriptive criteria (and here we can see 'the child' creep back in, if we hadn't already suspected it of maintaining a hidden presence within 'time' in the 'test of time' formulations) when she adds that 'some of the books written for children have a charm of style that insures their acceptance as literature in the best sense of the word ... simplicity and sincerity are important factors.'[88]

The Townsendian critics are giving an affirmative response to Julia Briggs' question of whether or not children's books should be critically considered by the same methods as adult books. To do this they follow specific elements of specific 'adult' methods, and, because for their purposes they choose methods which allow reference to 'real' 'adult' readers, they include references to 'real' 'child' readers. Ironically, this option is a sword that cuts two ways, for it is this sustained presence of 'real' 'child' which still forms one of the primary bases for adult literary criticisms which work with 'literature' and 'literary canons' to exclude children's fiction. Dutch critics Karel Eykman and Aukje Holtrop use the 'real' child and its supposed needs to free children's fiction from needing to qualify for the 'literary canon'. They argue, in discussing children's poetry, that 'there is no need to involve such things and verses with such weighty issues.'[89]* And they assume that the children's poetry they discuss would not 'pass' the literary

* My translation.

theoretical 'test' they apply, namely Wellek and Warrens' concepts of 'unity', 'complexity', and 'density', but also that this is not relevant for child-readers anyway.[90] Another Dutch critic, Jan Blokker, takes much the same view. He claims that children's fiction has never developed any new or original genres, themes, or literary points of view, but only used those which had already been developed in 'adult' literature.[91] Blokker, however, also sees this as being unimportant to child-readers: 'objections on literary aesthetic grounds seem to me to be irrelevant - one of the nice things about kids is that they have no taste in our adult sense of the word, and do not adopt our somewhat perverted tendency to differentiate between Kitsch and Art until they are halfway through puberty'.[92]*

Relying on adult criticism, therefore, which operates around a literary canon, offers as much danger as opportunity, depending on the 'child' used. But all these critics - whether their child-readers need 'literature' or not - rely on a 'child' to validate their argument, even if only to shore up, or create, an 'adult' critical view to oppose it. In order to preserve 'children's fiction' and 'children's literature', and 'adult fiction' and 'adult literature' as concepts and values there must be 'real' 'adult' and 'child' readers. Townsend himself sets up a 'child' reader who is close to his 'adult' reader: 'an author can - as I have said elsewhere - expect as much intelligence, as much imagination, as from the grown-up, and a good deal more readiness to enter into things and live the story.'[93] Jonathan Cott is another Townsendian critic, who also reveals an allegiance to an adult literary criticism

* My translation.

which supports 'literature' as a privileged mode of meaning and experience. In Pipers at the Gates of Dawn[94] Cott describes his reaction at what he calls his 'rediscovery' of children's books: 'My turning to children's books as an over-satiated adult reader induced in me the kind of "intense attention" that, the critic Helen Vendler has suggested, the greatest literature should induce, making us enter, in her words, a state of "receptivity and plasticity and innocence", and, in Shelley's words, purging "from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being".... For children's literature reawakens in us our sense of remembering, which, in fact, is often stored in, and brought to new life by, our senses.'[95] In Cott's description we find involved all the factors I have discussed: the reliance on the power of 'literature', the separation between 'child' and 'adult' which is simultaneously sustained and claimed to be overcome (Cott describes himself as an 'adult' reader, but the power of literature makes him 'child' again), and the designation of qualities and characteristics to the 'child' and 'adult' which direct and explain Cott's interest and purpose as a children's fiction reader and critic.

In short, even self-proclaimed 'book-centred' critics of children's fiction retain as their guiding star the 'real child', based on their reliance on a distinct literary discourse determined by adult readers and critics they select. It is this determined and determining effort involving children, adults, and literature, which forms the terms of discussion of children's fiction criticism.

Concluding Comments

As it has not been the intention of this thesis to achieve solutions to problems acknowledged within children's fiction criticism as such, but rather to examine the operations of the terms of discussion, I do not offer a 'conclusion'. I would, however, like to end my discussion with some comments which may clarify further my own, inevitable, purpose at having viewed children's fiction criticism in the terms described. As I have argued, the 'child' as discovery, as 'truth' or 'reality', is fundamental to children's fiction criticism, and therefore it depends on a distinction between 'fact' and 'fiction' on a wider scale. I could not have argued this statement without the idea of a resolution of this opposition as set out by Foucault, Derrida, Spivak, and others, as I indicated at the beginning of this thesis, and without Jacqueline Rose's partial application of aspects of these ideas specifically to the discourse of children's fiction. Of the 'world as literature', as Spivak put it, Roland Barthes also wrote:

> knowledge of the profound self is illusory: there are only different ways of articulating it. Racine lends himself to several languages - psychoanalytic, existential, tragic, psychological ...; none is innocent. But to acknowledge this incapacity to tell the truth about Racine is precisely to acknowledge, at last, the special status of literature.[1]

In having attempted to discuss children's literature criticisms as expressions of the incapacity to tell 'the truth' about 'the child' I cannot deny my own non-innocent perspective: it seems to me that moves away from claiming the existence of a true child as reader provoke anxiety, and, sometimes, hostility in children's fiction criticism. The 'child's' involvement with narratives of power, freedom, nature, innocence, and hope, as I have discussed, and the lack of success of even self-professed critical

efforts to disengage from it, reveal, to me, depths of feeling and the entrenchment of the imagery. It is again a comment from Barthes which addresses the roles of authoritative and dominant ideologies of education and society in relation to reading and literature which are so explicitly brought to bear around 'children' and 'childhood', when he argues that 'in precisely this way literature ..., by refusing to assign a "secret", an ultimate meaning, to the text (and to the world as text), liberates what may be called an anti-theological activity, an activity that is truly revolutionary, since to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases - reason, science, law.'[2] Barthes sees 'refusing God' as 'truly revolutionary', while I see it more as another 'belief', perhaps because Barthes strives towards not fixing meaning, and I believe we can never, despite this striving, not fix meaning at some level, as I have indicated perhaps in my references to Nietzsche in the thesis. As Richard Rorty writes of Foucault and Habermas:

> Michel Foucault is an ironist who is unwilling to be a liberal, whereas Jürgen Habermas is a liberal who is unwilling to be an ironist. Both Foucault and Habermas are, like [Isaiah] Berlin, critics of the traditional Platonic and Kantian attempts to isolate a core component of the self. Both see Nietzsche as critically important.[3]

I do not think that considering the child as 'invented' constitutes, as we have seen some children's literature critics imply, or argue openly, an ignorance of, or lack of concern for, the needs and suffering of sensing beings. I would argue that, as much as any effort which sees itself as born out of such interests, exploring purposes and their effects in inventing narratives can constitute an intense attempt to listen to this: whether it is a listening to stories of selves - as Barthes put it: 'I am the story which happens to me'[4] - or to stories others tell of selves is a matter of belief

or conviction at that given moment. Gayatri Spivak writes, in relation to accusations of remoteness or distance from urgent issues, that she has at times felt 'obliged to stress the distinction between my position and the position that, in a world of massive brutality, exploitation, and sexual oppression, advocates an aesthetization of life.'[5] Spivak explains that her interest is not primarily concerned with questions such as 'what is the nature of the aesthetic?', or 'how indeed are we to understand life?', but towards thinking about the issues that

> 1) the formulations of such questions is itself a determined and determining gesture. 2) Very generally speaking, literary people are still caught within a position where they must say: life is brute fact and outside art; the aesthetic is free and transcends life. 3) This declaration is the condition and effect of 'ideology'.[6]

If Spivak's defence is necessary, I would take the same line as she does towards children's literature critics such as Landsberg, Norton or Tucker. My thinking about children's literature criticism as systems of purpose and hierarchy is neither intended as a claim to knowledge of a superior truth, or as a claim to transcending criticism as it stands: it is the expression of my own interest in those purposes and hierarchies, and of the hope that any readers of this thesis may find that an angle of thought which inspires some of their own thinking about these interests.

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